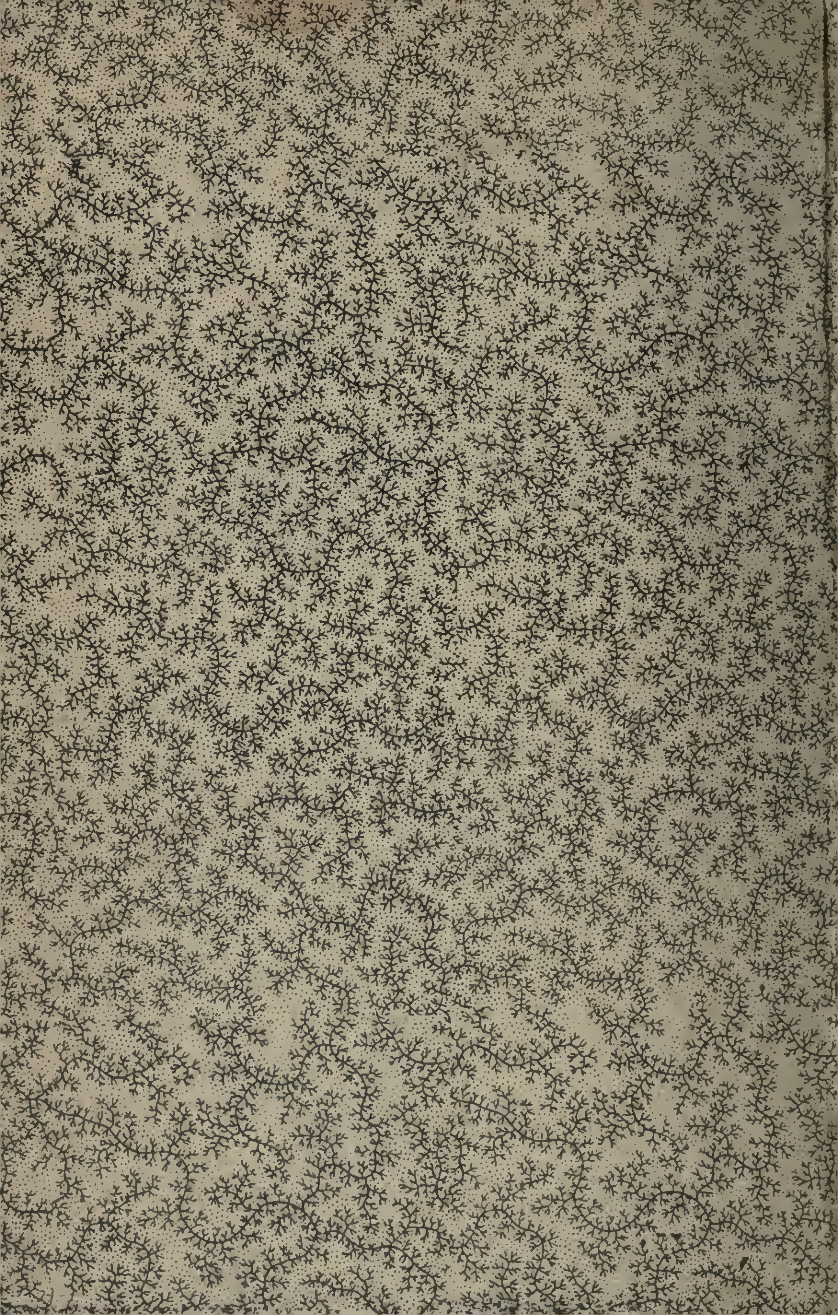
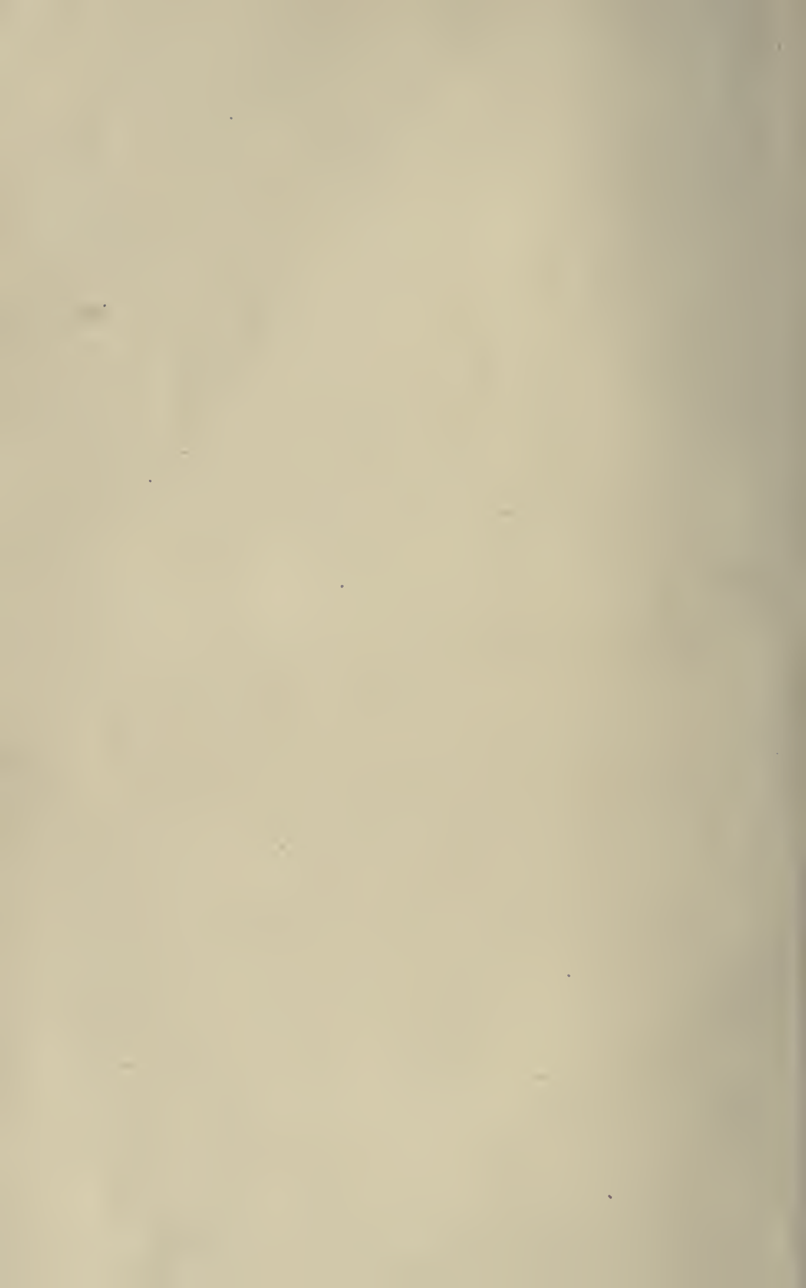














Philadelphia; now Allah Shehr.

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ANCIENT CITIES AND EMPIRES:

THEIR PROPHETIC DOOM,

READ IN THE LIGHT OF HISTORY AND MODERN RESEARCH.

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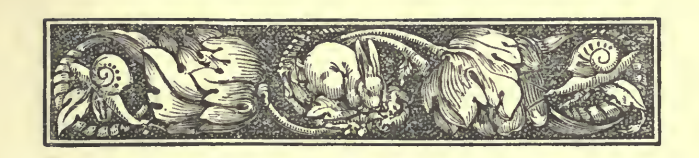
ILLUSTRATIONS.

PREFACE.

THE object of this work is to present those prophecies of the Bible upon the fulfillment of which new light has been thrown by modern research. A mere glance at the treatises of Bishop Newton and Rev. Alexander Keith, which have long been known as the most popular works on Prophecy, will show how much they have fallen behind the times. The last quarter of a century has made large contributions to the elucidation of many of the subjects which they discussed; and the questions which, during this same period, have been raised in reference to the divine origin and authority of the Scriptures, demand that the fulfillments of prophecy, which have a most important bearing upon their solution, should be carefully and candidly considered.

In order to a more full acquaintance with the circumstances in which the prophecies were uttered, each essay embodies a more or less extended historical sketch of the city, country or empire of which it treats. The leading authorities from which the facts have been derived are mentioned, either in the text or the foot-notes, while numerous suggestions have been derived from other sources, but more especially from persons who have either visited the scenes described, or have made themselves

specially acquainted with the various topics brought under review. The reader will meet frequently with features of fulfilled prophecy to which recent explorations of travelers and historians have called attention. In the superabundance of illustrative material, much has of necessity been omitted which would have been of scarcely less interest than what has been inserted. But the demands of a popular treatise, such as this is designed to be, have excluded all that could be considered as mere repetition.



ANCIENT

CITIES AND EMPIRES.

HAS God indeed spoken to men? Is the Bible, in any proper sense, his Word?

Every one is interested in the right decision of these questions. Let the witnesses, then, be called.

The witnesses are many, and Prophecy is one, yet but one, among them. The voice of a single witness however, is important, when it corroborates the testimony of others. The prophets had indeed a mission distinct from the foretelling of future events. They were the religious teachers of their nation. But incidentally, almost necessarily, their portrayal of threatened judgments took the form of what we call prophecy. Did they declare truthfully what was yet to be? If so, were they taught and guided by human sagacity, or by the inspiration of Him who seeth the end from the beginning?

Several years before the Pilgrims landed at Plymouth, Capt. John Smith, returning from the New

World to England, claimed to have ranged the coast of what was then called North Virginia, from Penobscot to Cape Cod. There was something strange in the claim, for he asserted that he had done it in an open boat with eight men; yet he drew up a map of the country, with the long line of coast, its bays and harbors, and promontories and rivers. Here, then, was an opportunity of putting his claims to the test. Future explorers, following his track, might see whether his chart was accurate. The test was applied. His chart was not remarkably minute. Many minor features of the coast, as might have been anticipated, were found to have been overlooked. But no one could doubt the truthfulness of his claim.

Prophecy is the chart which portrays the outline of a large extent of coast on the shores of the Ocean of Time. History tests the chart. It follows the prophet's track, and verifies or refutes his claims. The Future—once unknown except by the prophetic chart—becomes the Past, and the explorer, traversing it familiarly, may determine its general accuracy.

One portion of the Scripture prophecies is quite distinct, and may be considered by itself. It is that which has respect to the great kingdoms and empires of the Eastern World. That world has a strange charm for us. There was the cradle of the race. There for long centuries the hopes of the future were germinating. There art and science and letters began their career. There the first temples were built. There the first experiments of social and civil order were made. So much of the past

remains yet unchanged, that we now go there to see how the patriarchs lived, how Oriental shepherds fed their flocks. Bible allusions to scenery and costumes become transparencies, as we grow familiar with Oriental life, presenting to-day many of the same features which it did thirty centuries ago. No wonder that it fascinates the traveler, luring him across oceans and continents. No wonder that a strange curiosity seizes him to explore the monuments of a civilization that was already old when Alexander made his conquests.

The result has been that our knowledge of the East has been vastly increased during the present century, and especially within the period of the last thirty years. Oriental travel has already a vast literature of its own. America has sent to that distant region scores of explorers, and among them her best scholars and artists. Stephens and Olin, and Thomson and Lynch, Robinson and Osborn, and Bausman and Curtis, Prime and Bartlett, not to mention others, have contributed, along with English travelers like Volney and Layard, and Stanley and Martineau and Porter, to photograph the costume, habits and scenery of Eastern lands. In our own homes, and by our quiet firesides, we can gaze through their eyes on landscapes that were familiar to the old patriarchs—on monuments of ancient civilization that have survived the races that reared them—on the evidences of fulfilled predictions, where buried palaces and broken pillars attest a doom that once seemed incredible. The Pyramids rise on our

horizon, and we see them sleeping still in imperishable grandeur, undisturbed while empires fall around. We ascend the Nile, and are awed by the majestic ruins of ancient Thebes, and instructed and impressed by the memorials of an art that dates but a few centuries after the deluge. We pass over to the Arabian desert, and follow the track of the Israelites in their wanderings, till we stand beneath the rugged brow of Sinai, or are prepared, with Moses to ascend to the top of Pisgah, and survey the very hills and mountains of the Land of Promise, as they met the eye of the dying seer. Jordan is gleaming in silver light, as it winds its way down to that briny sea on the shores of which once flourished the guilty Cities of the Plain. We visit Babylon and read the name of its great builder on each brick of his palaces, or explore anew the memorials of Assyrian greatness, and read on the sculptured marble the conquests of Assyrian kings. Far away on the western horizon Lebanon stretches its giant range, while Tyre and Sidon, with ruins enough to preserve their identity, sleep under its morning shadow. Carmel is yonder on the borders of the sea, and we may tread the very spot where the prophet stood when he sent his servant to watch the sign of the gathering storm. Familiar objects come thronging upon our view—Ebal and Gerizim, Sychar and Joseph's Well, Samaria, "the crown of pride," or "the head of the fat valley," Gilboa and Hermon, the Sea of Tiberias, Capernaum and Bethsaida and Nazareth, "the mountains

round about Jerusalem;" princely among them all, the Mount of Olives, from which many a sandaled prophet gazed down on the grandeur of the city whose doom he foretold.

It is not strange that a thoughtful traveler, familiar with the Bible, should be prepared to say, with Rev. Dr. Hawes,*—"Take a position on the top of Mount Olivet, and view the scene that spreads around you, and you will seem to hear a thousand voices speaking to you of scriptural events, and giving you a new and deeper impression of their reality." Scores of travelers have borne testimony accordant with his, when he adds, "Indeed we cannot pass through Syria and Palestine without meeting everywhere with objects to remind us of the truth of God in his word. There prophecy was uttered by seers of old, and the prophecy has had its awful fulfillment. The naked rocks, the deserted plains, the wasted villages and ruined towns, the whole sterile, desolate aspect of the country, are but a faithful commentary on the declarations of the Bible, forewarning of judgments that should come in punishment of idolatry and sin."†

It is thus the observant traveler has re-explored the lines of the prophetic chart, while the historian has been busy in bringing the past and the present face to face. We see the slow yet sure progress with which the predicted doom moved on till it overtook the guilty cities and kingdoms of the ancient world. We have placed before us the means to de-

* The East, p. 193. † Ibid., p. 195.

termine how precise and accurate has been the fulfillment of prophecy, and to judge how far it was possible for unaided human sagacity to foresee the result.

Assuming, then, only this, as a simple fact, that traveler after traveler has been profoundly impressed with what seemed to him the fulfillment of Bible predictions, we feel drawn toward an investigation which possesses the double charm of a theme attractive in itself, and calculated to vindicate the claims of the Hebrew prophets to a Divine inspiration. Even men like Volney, whose infidelity was avowed, or writers like Martineau, whose sympathies and prejudices were opposed to whatever was supernatural or miraculous, have undesignedly reported that which, from other lips and other pens, would have seemed an argument for the truth of prophecy. They have shown, that like a true map, the chart of prophecy was strikingly faithful in many of its main features, and they have left it for others to trace out more fully the correspondence of prophecy with its fulfillment.

What are we to think, then, of these writings, an integral part of the volume which the Christian would regard as a revelation from heaven? They challenge our closest attention, our most devout study. Volumes upon volumes of commentary have been written on the German Niebelungen, the early songs in which German genius found poetic expression. Efforts are now making to recover and restore to their integrity the relics of ancient English poetry. The

songs of the Troubadours have invited for a long time the attention of scholars learned as well as curious; but among all these we meet with nothing that warrants their comparison with the Hebrew prophets. In all literature, these, as combining the gifts of the poet and the seer, must be left to stand alone, while even in those points in which the early poetry of other nations may be regarded as approaching them they rise to undisputed pre-eminence. They occupy a field in which they have no rival to fear. The standard that may be applied elsewhere cannot be applied to measure them.

There are indeed no writings in the world to compare with those of the Hebrew prophets. Differing vastly from one another in style and expression; speaking on different subjects and on different occasions, through a period of not far from four hundred years; some of them springing from the highest, and some from the humblest ranks; one uttering his warnings under the shadow of the temple at Jerusalem, another declaring his visions by the river Chebar, and still another speaking words of hope and promise amid the ruins of the sacred city;—they are all singularly accordant, in the sublime views which they present of the Divine character, and in that lofty and fearless spirit in which they denounce the judgments of heaven upon the sins of men and nations. On the current of their thought we are borne along, as it were upon some majestic stream, and the scenes that pass before our eyes sometimes entrance us with their beauty, sometimes

awe us by their terror. Snow-capped mountains and smiling valleys, palisades and precipices and waving harvests, are not more varied in outline or in the impression they leave upon us, than the pictures of mercy or judgment in which prophecy portrays the doom of nations; while ever in the background we discern the cloudy pavilion of *His* throne, who

> "Works unseen
> By the impure, and hears His power denied."

If the poetic force and beauty of the prophecy were not cast into the shade by the moral grandeur of the prophet's position, if the words themselves were not breathed forth in a tone of more than human authority, we should be left simply to admire the gracefulness or sublimity of strains which no ancient or modern bard has presumed to rival. Hesiod and Homer and Pindar would be left in silence, that we might listen to the grander utterance of Isaiah, teaching us to gaze upward to Him before whom the nations are as a drop of the bucket, and are counted as the small dust of the balance. Even the magnificent conceptions of Dante and Milton would seem to grow tame and commonplace when we are called to witness the doom of empires, and hear the mocking exultation of the nations over Lucifer, Son of the Morning, while hell from beneath is moved to meet him at his coming.

But the prophet is greater than the poet. Inspiration soars beyond the reach of imagination's wing. While the messenger of the King of kings speaks,

royal splendor is but tawdry ornament and royal majesty is dwarfed by a sublimer presence. In the words spoken there is an awful emphasis and a superhuman boldness. The sentence of doom is traced by a mysterious hand on the walls of palaces that have rung with blasphemous revel. Kings and leaders of mighty armies are laid aside like pawns on the chess-board. History becomes a record of the epitaphs of nations, while beyond the graveyard of centuries that witness their rise, and receive their dust, rises in the background the "kingdom which shall never be destroyed."

Did these prophets speak of themselves, or as they were moved by the Holy Ghost? It is a great question—a momentous one! Let the man who classes their inspiration with that of heathen poets explain to us their incomparable superiority. Why is it that as we listen to them Olympus becomes a mole-hill, and the grandest conceptions that heathen imagination could frame of the gods sink beneath contempt? How was it that they rose to such consistent, exalted, majestic conceptions of the Great Ruler of nations and of men? How was it that, called from their herds and vineyards, they poured forth strains that have held the ears of nations enchanted for more than twenty centuries? Was all this only the outburst of native genius? Do we here witness simply the bloom of flowers that *happened* to be rooted in the soil of Palestine, but might have been nurtured as well on the banks of the Indus or the shores of the Ægean?

Even if we could have been in doubt before, the unrolled map of prophecy, laid alongside of the chart of history, shows us that their inspiration was from above. They had, with the poet's beauty and the poet's fire, the insight and the foresight of the seer. Note how in the golden-headed image of Daniel's prophecy we have all ages and nations sculptured, as it were, in one gigantic ideal form, yet so faithful in outline and proportion, that the student of history to-day recognizes in it the most masterly and symmetrical delineation of the successive empires of the world.

Again and again, it seems as though the prophet stood on the Pisgah of time, and through the dim and hazy atmosphere discerned the head-lands and mountain-chains and river-courses of the distant future. Along with his reproofs and rebukes, he combines denunciation, sometimes of general and sometimes of specific judgments, numerous and varied enough—if they can be proved groundless—to expose his pretensions to merited contempt. Although his special mission is that of an inspired teacher, a preacher of righteousness, he glances onward from national sin to national retribution, and portrays oftentimes its methods and its instruments. Sometimes, indeed, the threatening is conditional, but sometimes it is absolute, and we are permitted, in the light of recorded history and explored fact, to decide whether the utterance is that of a wild fanaticism or of a divinely inspired assurance. If we find, therefore, literal and exact fulfillments of predictions

uttered centuries before—fulfillments which no mere human sagacity could have foreseen—fulfillments that never could have been brought about by the predictions themselves—we are forced to the single and inevitable conclusion, that "holy men of old spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost."

The range of prophecy is no narrow line of isolated facts, no series of events bounded by a few years or by the contracted limits of a single people. It is as broad as human history, as extended as the destiny of the race. Prophets, whose national sympathies might well be supposed to be as contracted as the prejudices in which the nation to which they belonged was nurtured—who occupied a standpoint on that narrow strip of soil between the Jordan and Mediterranean, which might seem to preclude a large, broad survey of the unfolding destinies of nations—are heard speaking as if from a watch-tower that commands at once all lands and ages. The isolated inhabitant of Palestine becomes a cosmopolitan. The descendant of Abraham, no longer enslaved by the narrow sympathies of race, takes the deepest interest in the career and fate of Gentile nations. Egypt, Assyria, Babylon, Edom, Moab, Damascus, Sidon and Tyre,—all the contemporary nations of the world—become the theme of prophecy, and in studying the scroll that records their predestined fate we have the map of the world for successive centuries unrolled before us. The prophecy that assumes to occupy this field, unless divinely guided, must prove a magnificent forgery, to

be exposed by the stern record of history; or its claim to inspiration, if confirmed by subsequent events, must put upon it the indisputable stamp of Divine authority. To look this alternative in the face is the part of every man who feels that it does not become him to be heedless when, through human lips, a voice is calling to him from the skies.





EGYPT.

THE Egyptians are perhaps the oldest historical people in the world. Egypt was a kingdom a thousand years before Romulus gathered his robber band around him, and built the mud walls of ancient Rome. The oldest parchment in the world is modern to the date of the Pyramids. Long before Greece could boast of her famous orators and poets, Herodotus listened to the tales of Egyptian priests, recounting to him long lines of kings, and pointing to national monuments and an advanced civilization to confirm their story.* Babylon and Nineveh were scarcely known, even by name, when Egypt had perfected her institutions and attained the rank of a well-established kingdom.

It is not easy to fix the date of her origin. A critical examination reduces her claims to antiquity from tens of thousands to about twenty-seven hundred years before Christ, although Lepsius would

* Böckh regarding—without sufficient warrant, in the judgment of good scholars—the earliest thirty dynasties as consecutive, dates the foundation of the Egyptian kingdom 5702 years before Christ. Bunsen's exaggerated estimate of Egyptian antiquity is well known. He dates the kingdom, however, 3643 B. C.

allow twelve hundred more. The lists of her kings are evidently, in some cases, those of dynasties that ruled at the same time in different parts of the land, and furnish no reliable basis of calculation. Her early inhabitants were evidently of Asiatic origin, and belonged to the Caucasian stock. They still retained traditions—as of the unity of God—which indicated their near relation to the immediate descendants of Noah. In this respect they may be compared with the ancient Persians, in behalf of whom the same claim is made. How long a time elapsed before these traditions gave place to Egyptian idolatry, it is impossible to say, but while they progressed in the knowledge and practice of the arts, they lost the knowledge of the true God.

At an early period they became eminent in mechanical skill, and made some marked attainments in scientific discovery. We can fix no exact dates, but long before Jacob went down into Egypt, the fame of their knowledge had gone abroad, and the description of Moses, as "learned in all the wisdom of the Egyptians," must have derived its significance from their superior culture. Some, at least, of the larger pyramids had been already erected. Facing exactly, as these did, the four points of the compass, they testify to the astronomical knowledge as well as the mechanical skill of the Egyptians. The hieroglyphics, still to be traced on their more ancient monuments, indicate the attainments of a people who no longer were left to depend on tradition alone. While we study them

to-day, we seem to note the origin and growth of the alphabet. Pictured objects are passing into written words. The first letter of the name of each, as presented in painting or sculpture, is the letter to be employed in spelling out the syllable or sentence. Thus the foundation is laid for literary progress, and we feel that the light of civilization has already dawned upon the valley of the Nile.

It is a strange valley. There is no other like it on the face of the globe. A gigantic furrow has been ploughed from the mountains of Central Africa to the Mediterranean, and through this valley, without a single tributary to swell its current, and along lands watered only by dews and the annual flood, flows the stream to which Egypt owes all its fertility, and which the ancient inhabitants worshipped as a god. On either side, with here and there an oasis, extend the desert sands—a better protection than Chinese walls. A strange productiveness, an inexhaustible fertility, characterize this narrow strip of land, bordering on the stream, and flooded yearly by its rising waters. For long centuries from the dawn of history, Egypt had been the granary of all neighboring states. Its loamy soil was well adapted for burned or unburned brick. Its limestone and sandstone quarries, lining the banks of the Nile, invited the attention of the sculptor and builder. Along the same valley were to be found the honey-colored alabaster, porphyry and breccia. A pure sky, a climate warm but healthful, a dry atmosphere, that contributed to the preservation of the minutest

lines of sculptured ornament, added to the charms of this sheltered region, and fostered the development of a civilization whose monuments have been the wonder of all subsequent ages.

The pyramids, massive, stupendous, built to defy the waste and wear of centuries, are no inappropriate type of the old Egyptian art. It was no mean skill that quarried the large masses of rock that compose them, transported them across the Nile, transferred them to the site of the pyramid, and lifted them into their place. Nor is our wonder diminished when we consider the giant structures themselves, covering from four to eleven acres of ground, and rising to a height of from four to seven hundred feet; or observe how they are put together, with a precision unsurpassed in the masonry of ancient or modern times.

But the pyramid-age was familiar with other arts than those of the builder. The sculptured tombs around the pyramids of Cheops and Chephren, as well as elsewhere, give us a surprisingly vivid picture of ancient Egyptian life, its arts and trades, its offices and dignities, its occupations and its worship of the gods and the dead. A thousand years, at least, before the silence of other nations was broken by a single distinct voice—if we except that of the Hebrew Scriptures—which has reached our times, the Egyptian artist was engaged in embodying in forms and colors, still extant, the employments, the learning, the religious ideas, the habits and the

Entrance to Ancient Egyptian Temple.

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customs of his age.* The monuments, moreover, are in many cases fairly clothed with inscriptions, which challenge the study and interpretation of modern scholars. The traveler gazes at vast buildings, covered over in every part with writings—the very lines of the cornice and the spaces between the sculptures being crowded with hieroglyphics. It is as if every inch of the palaces, churches, and public buildings of a great city were written over by chiseled lettering in stone, in which the facts and ideas of the nation's life—its religion, philosophy and science—were recorded.

In the great temple of Aboo-Simbel, for instance, is the medallion picture of a walled town, together with the besieged and besiegers. The battle-scenes on the walls of the temple also are all alive with strong warriors, flying foes, trampled victims and crowds of chariots. On the temple at Beit-El-Welle we see the ancient Rameses on his throne, while the wealth of conquered Ethiopia is laid as tribute at his feet. Bags of gold, elephants' tusks, leopard skins, and other forms of tropical wealth, are all there. The battle-scene, too, is pictured history. The foe are hastening on; a woman cooking under a tree is warned by her little boy that the conqueror is at hand; a wounded chief is borne off by his soldiers, while the king in his chariot is discharging arrows as he flies.† On the walls of the old palace of Rameses at Thebes we see the

* Herzog's Real-Encyclopedia, Art. Egypt.

† Martineau's Eastern Life, p. 133.

conqueror driving over prostrate and bound captives, while men are falling around him in all manner of desperate attitudes. The siege and river scenes are curious. We see the scaling ladder, the shields, bridges, fosses and towers. Even the spear-heads of the floundering phalanx are carefully distinguished from the ripple of the stream through which they struggle.*

Elsewhere we meet with more peaceful scenes. At Philæ we find wisdom speaking through sculptured emblems. On the walls of its temples "every morsel of decoration is a message or admonition." Here is the lotus, there the drooping cup: here the ibis, and there the wild duck and reeds: here the symbols of purity and stability alternate, and there those of life and power.† At Silsilis, as well as at Koum-Ombos, we meet with half-finished paintings, untouched by human hand for more than two thousand years. No rain has washed them out, no damp has molded them. It is as if the artist's pencil had just dropped from his hand, the next moment to be resumed, although that hand for unknown generations may have been folded in mummy cerements in some tomb of the neighboring hills.

In some of the old tombs we have the ancient Egyptian theology. Thoughts of death, judgment, immortality and retribution are pictured there. The life of the departed is written in the scenes traced on the walls of his last abode. We read the crises

* Martineau, p 165. † Ibid., p. 145.

of his life, the vicissitudes of his earthly fortunes. We note his wealth, his rank, his employments. We can study every article of dress, every instrument of music, the food for the meals, the furniture of the dwelling. We have before us the processes of agriculture, the ploughing, the sowing of the seed, the reaping and the threshing, even to the oxen treading out the grain. Scribes, using the same reed which was to be employed a thousand years later as a pen, are seen taking an inventory of the rich man's estate, and before them are bags of grain and bags of gold, every form of ornamental and useful wealth, from gold rings to goats and swine. In the Tombs of the Queens at Thebes we find ourselves in suites of apartments that seem more like a succession of beautiful boudoirs than the gloomy domicils of the dead.* The hard stucco of the walls is polished till it reflects the light almost like a mirror, and is covered with scenes chastely sculptured and touched by a skillful pencil, with colors of strange brilliancy, as fresh as if just from the artist's hand. Every thing seems designed to chase away the thought of death. Gazing at the walls, we see the dancers entering at an open door. They come, with light step and Attic grace, to a feast rather than a funeral. Amid the most finished elegance the hostess welcomes her guests. The apartment is magnificently adorned, the furniture is covered with costly stuff.

Among the paintings at Benee-Hassan we are

* D'tson's Par. Papers, p. 435.

introduced to the every-day scenes of Egyptian life. We see the ships that floated the commerce of the Nile more than three thousand years ago. Flax-dressers, spinners, weavers, potters, painters, glass-blowers, carpenters, statuaries, are seen prosecuting their several arts. The doctor is prescribing for his patient, the herdsman looking after his cattle. The Nile is represented with its fish, and a hippopotamus is half buried in its ooze. Women are engaged in gymnastics. Games of ball are going forward. Great men are attended by dwarfs and buffoons, and harpers with their seven-stringed harps are there.

At Medinet-Abou—where the palace is attached to the temple, and may, perhaps, be called a temple-palace—we come upon the Pavilion of Rameses, and on the walls are scenes adapted to a princely taste. We see him seated and receiving homage from his attendants. In another place we have a coronation—a king on his canopied throne borne by twelve princes, while a great procession follows of nobles, priests, soldiers and official personages. A scribe reads from a scroll. The high-priest offers incense. A band discourses music. In another painting the king is making offerings to his god. Priests bear the statues of his ancestors and a crowd of standards. Elsewhere again his victories are commemorated. Heaps of severed hands and heaps of human tongues, with rows of captives to be numbered by the thousand, declare at once his cruelty and his conquests. Even his naval prowess

is manifest in the triumph of Egyptian galleys with the lion's head at the prow.*

There have not been wanting those who claim that the old Egyptian theology, traceable on the monuments, approximated to the grand simplicity and purity of revealed truth; that Osiris was to his ancient worshipers what the Messiah was to the Jews, or Christ to those who now bear his name;† that the doctrines of immortality and stern retribution—Osiris himself performing his office as judge of the dead—were but slightly divergent from the kindred doctrines of the New Testament. "There was," says one, "a clear perception of a future state, such as is generally entertained among Christians at the present day. The dead did not go unjudged; he was weighed in the balance, and if found wanting there was an *amenti* for him; but if good, he ascended among the stars."‡

Certain it is that, at the earliest period of Egyptian history of which documentary evidence remains to us, we find the clearest and worthiest conceptions of the Divine attributes and worship, as if the light of tradition was brighter the nearer it was to its original source. In succeeding generations there is not only no advance, but there is rather retrogression. The tendency to idolatry strengthens. The popular worship becomes more corrupt and debased. Yet even thus Egypt was for ages the eye of the world, as Athens was "the eye of Greece." Moses was learned in all the wisdom of

* Martineau, 191. † Ibid., 140. ‡ Ditson, 429.

the Egyptians, and the Scripture record of the fact is evidence of the reputation which that wisdom had attained. From other lands, through succeeding ages, came curious travelers and inquiring scholars and philosophers, to gather up and carry back to their own countrymen the treasures of Egyptian thought and learning. Thales (600 B. C.), the first Greek who predicted an eclipse, obtained in Egypt his first knowledge of geometry, and on his return imparted his discoveries. His connection with Egypt throws light upon his theories of creation or existence. Tradition, with surprise, reported him as saying, "The most ancient of things existing is God, for he is the uncreated: the most beautiful thing is the universe, for it is God's creation." Doubtless in Egypt he learned the lesson which his countrymen heard him repeat with wonder, that there is nothing to choose between life and death.

Next, perhaps, came Solon (510 B. C.), with his cargo of olive-oil from Athens, to exchange for Egyptian corn and the luxuries of the East. According to Plato, he returned with a richer cargo of wisdom, derived from converse with the priests of Lais, and thenceforth he is known as the wisest law-maker of Greece. Not far from the same time, perhaps even earlier than Solon, came the celebrated Pythagoras, thirsting for knowledge, receiving from Amasis a cordial welcome, and lingering in Egypt many years; and a careful study of his philosophy will show how much it owes to the lights and shadows of Egyptian thought. The Greek Anax-

agoras, and many of his countrymen with him, zealous in the pursuit of knowledge, studied in the Egyptian schools; and the opinions for which he is supposed to have been banished are strikingly accordant with portions of the philosophy of Egypt. Next came Herodotus, gazing with wonder on monuments and works of art which he found language too poor adequately to describe; and ere long he is followed by Plato, who thenceforth leaves the stamp of his thought on the philosophies of after centuries. Associated with him, and studying in the schools of Heliopolis, are his countrymen, Eudoxus the astronomer, and Chrysippus the physician.

After this date the visitors to Egypt who made their mark on the literature and learning of the world became too numerous to mention. Plutarch's biographer sends him to Egypt. Strabo pursued his geographical studies there. The Alexandrian library reveals a thirst for knowledge unparalleled elsewhere. For generation after generation Egypt was the school of the world. The highest attainable wisdom of the world was there. "From the lips of this thoughtful people," it has been said, doubtless with some exaggeration, "infant nations learned, through a long course of centuries, whatever they held that was most noble concerning the origin and tendencies of things, and what was most to be desired for the race of man at large and the soul of every individual man." How strange that a people who attained to such a distinction while the rest of the world was sunk in barbarism, should

steadily gravitate toward a barbarism still more degraded than that around them! The philosophy that accepts the theory of the necessary progress of humanity would have prophesied a far different result.

But leaving the pyramid-age behind us, we meet with no real advance—occasional periods perhaps excepted—in Egyptian art for successive centuries. The fountain of civilization burst forth into a full stream almost at the very first, but a stream that, like the Nile, was to receive no tributaries through its after course. Science and artistic skill reached, as it were at a bound, the goal which they were not to pass. The successive steps, at least, of their early history we are unable clearly to define. It was at a very early date that Egypt attained her highest position. The primitive dynasties—the first ascribed to seven supreme gods, the second to twelve subordinate deities, and the third to thirty gods or demi-gods—are simply myths to us. Throwing these aside, therefore, and making large allowances for exaggeration in those that follow, we yet find that, 2240 years before Christ, Thebes had become the powerful and splendid capital of a large part of Upper Egypt. Some two hundred years after this we find traces of the invasion known as that of the "Shepherd Kings," who swept over Lower Egypt, and yet already seven hundred years had elapsed since Menes, the first historic human king, had ascended the throne. The "Shepherds" were a foreign race, possibly Phenicians or Philistines.

They came as invaders and conquerors, and maintained their hated, though perhaps beneficent, dynasty in Lower Egypt, for a period of about five hundred years (2031–1520 B. C.). For the native religion they manifested an undisguised contempt. Their rule was severe and despotic, and at length provoked the resistance of the subject race. Their very name became odious, and so permanent was the prejudice of the Egyptians against it, that even when Jacob with his family went down into Egypt, they and their cattle were required to dwell in the land of Goshen (Gen. xlvi. 34), "for every shepherd is an abomination to the Egyptians." Until this era the horse does not appear on the Egyptian monuments. It is more than possible that it was introduced by the invaders, and when the Shepherd Kings disappear, Egypt has her "horses and her chariots," with which she pursued after her fleeing bondmen, and in which the prophet rebukes her for reposing her trust.

And now we reach the point where the history of the Jews blends itself with that of Egypt.* The brick materials of some of the pyramids, as well as Theban sculptures, corroborate the truth of the Scripture narrative. To make the bricks of which these pyramids are composed must have required

* Some have held that the Israelites were welcomed to Egypt by the Shepherd Kings, and that upon their expulsion the oppression of the former commenced. This theory would relieve some chronological difficulties, but it conflicts with the statement that at the very first "every shepherd is an abomination to the Egyptians."

enormous labor. Beyond all question this was in voluntary—the labor of serfs and bondmen. Every brick, though it had not been stamped by a despot's name, would have suggested a despot's oppression, and the Theban sculptures, which belong to a period subsequent perhaps to the servitude of the Israelites, set vividly before us scenes strikingly parallel to those described in the book of Exodus. "The brick-makers are evidently captives, working at heavy burdens, under taskmasters who are plying the stick and whip without mercy. To complete the illustration, the bricks of several buildings are found mixed with chopped straw, for without some such substance the fine alluvial mud was too friable to bind well."*

The monumental records are silent as to the disaster which attended the deliverance of the Israelites. The inglorious event was one which patriotic pride would choose to consign to oblivion. We are not surprised that no trace of it is to be found in Egyptian annals. Whatever date may be assigned to the exodus of the Israelites,† the second and most marked period of Egyptian power and splendor followed upon the accession of the eighteenth and nineteenth dynasties (1520–1340 B. C.). The Shepherd Kings had been expelled. A ruler of the

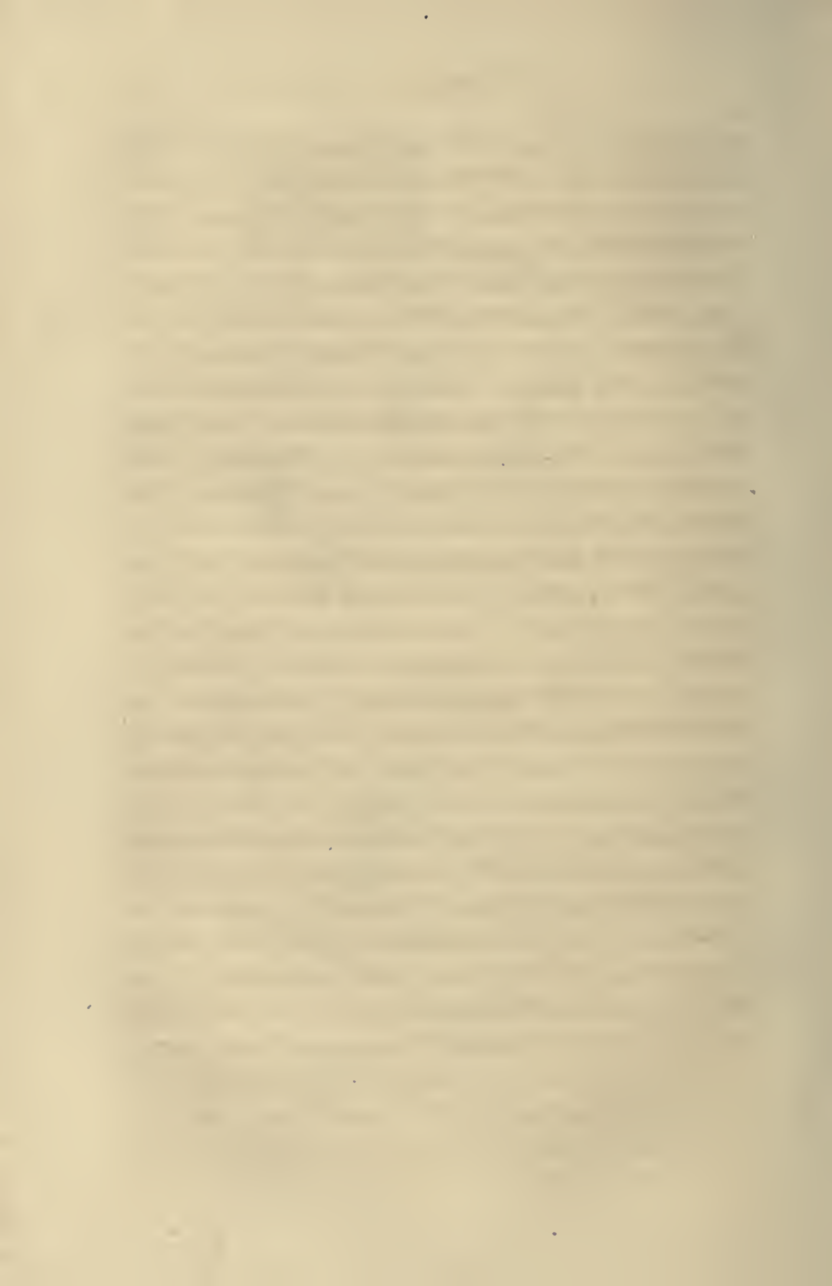
* Smith's Hist. of the World, I. 104.

† According to the commonly-received Scripture chronology, the date of the exodus is 1491 B. C., after a sojourn there by the Israelites of 215, or at most of 430 years. Smith's Bible Dictionary decides in favor of 1652 as the correct date.



Ancient Egyptian Brickmakers. From the Tomb of Roschere, "The Superintendent of Great Buildings," to Thothmes III.

Page 32.



native race, Aahmes, had ascended the throne, and under him native genius was encouraged. Ethiopia was subjected to tribute. Magnificent temples were built at Thebes and Memphis. Horses and chariots came into general use, and Egypt became a maritime power. Thothmes III. was not only a great builder, but a great conqueror. Nineveh was reduced, and perhaps Babylon also was subjected to his sway.* Under him that grand structure, the temple of Karnak, the chief sanctuary of Thebes, was completed, and no kingdom of the world could rival his in wealth or extended dominion.

Thus, while the Israelites were slowly securing the mastery of Palestine, or—under the Judges—were even falling back toward barbarism, Egypt was rising to an unprecedented degree of power and civilization. Under Amunoph III., the great-grandson of Thothmes III., the great temple on the west bank at Thebes was built, and the colossal statues of the vocal Memnon and its fellow, rising forty-seven feet above the pedestal, or fifty-three feet above the plain, were reared. That magnificence was then attained of which Belzoni, on his visit to Thebes, thus records the desolation: "It appeared to me like entering a city of giants, who after a long conflict, were all destroyed, leaving the ruins of their temples as the only proof of their former existence."

The nineteenth dynasty began in 1340, or, according to Wilkinson, 1324 B. C., with the Sethos of Manetho, or the Sesostris of the Greeks. He ex-

* This is by no means certain.

tended his conquests to the valley of the Orontes, and his warlike exploits are depicted in bas-reliefs on the northern wall of the grand "Hall of Columns" erected by him in the temple of Karnak. Yet his fame was eclipsed by that of his more noted son, Rameses II., the most illustrious of the Pharaohs. His reign was distinguished not only by foreign wars, but by the erection of the temples, grand and beautiful, with which he adorned Egypt. He prosecuted his father's project of connecting the waters of the Mediterranean with those of the Red Sea, employing his captives, doubtless, as his father did, in labor on the canals, and in transporting stone for his temples. In Upper Egypt the rock-hewn temples of Abou-Simbel are the enduring monuments of royal wealth and enterprise, and are faced with colossal statues, the largest perhaps in the world. Across the Nile, west of Thebes, rose the imposing building now known as the Ramesium (or Rameseon), in the central hall of which stood the statue of Rameses himself, sixty feet in height. Under the reign of Rameses' son, the Rabbis fix the date of the exodus; and it must be admitted that the intestine troubles which now occurred accord well with the condition into which we might suppose Egypt to fall upon the catastrophe of the Red Sea.

The twentieth dynasty begins 1220 or 1232 B. C. Its kings made few conquests, although the pictures of their times delineate sea-fights which link the history of Egypt with that of Greece. The wife of Solomon must have been a daughter of one of the

kings of the twenty-first dynasty, which dates from 1085 B. C. Priestly rule now acquired a marked ascendancy, and the capital was removed from Thebes to Lower Egypt, unless, as is more probable, the kingdom had become divided.

In the person of Sheshonk I., the Shishak of the Bible, the twenty-second dynasty ascended the throne. By him the unity of the kingdom was restored and the credit of Egyptian arms was revived. Early in his reign he sheltered Jeroboam, when he fled from Solomon, and at a later period (971 B. C.) warred with Rehoboam, and captured and pillaged Jerusalem. "The king of Judah" now, for the first time, finds a place upon the Egyptian monuments. On the outside of the south wall of the temple of Karnak is a representation of the conquests of Sheshonk I., comprising the kingdom of Judah and several Hebrew towns. But his successor, Osorkon I. (probably the Zerab of Scripture, defeated by Asa), inaugurates the period of Egyptian decline. The splendor of Egypt now pales before the rising power of Assyria, and for two hundred and fifty years suffers an eclipse.

Under an Ethiopian dynasty, the twenty-fifth, in the person of Shebek II., the So of Scripture, the energy of the kingdom was revived. He became the ally of Hoshea, the last king of Israel, but in spite of his aid the Assyrian prevailed, and the Ten Tribes were carried away into captivity. His successor was Tirhakah, who advanced against Sennacherib, in support of Hezekiah. Whether any

actual battle was fought is uncertain, but the destruction of the Assyrian army was equivalent to an Egyptian triumph. Herodotus, gathering his information from Egyptian priests, relates from their writings the miraculous destruction of the Assyrian host. In the night-time the quivers and bowstrings of the invaders, as well as the thongs by which they held their shields, were devoured, it is said, by innumerable field-mice, so that the immense army, incapable of resistance, fell an easy prey to their foes. It is easy to see the plausibility with which this story would commend itself to those who regarded as divine the animal to which their deliverance was thus ascribed.

Tirhakah's reign of twenty years closed in 704 B. C. A period of comparative quiet followed, until several aspirants who had divided Egypt among them quarreled for the supremacy. The most fortunate among these was Psammeticus I., whose long reign of fifty-four years commenced in 664 B. C. By him, Ashdod, after a siege of twenty-nine years, was recovered from the Assyrians. His son Neko, the Pharaoh-Necho of Scripture, continued the war in Palestine, and defeated Josiah at Megiddo (B. C. 608–7). But already a new power had risen to contest his progress. Nebuchadnezzar led the armies of Babylon against him, and he was defeated at Carchemish (605–4 B. C.). Further resistance was vain; the king whom Necho had set up at Jerusalem was deposed; and thenceforth (2 Kings xxiv. 7) "the king of Egypt came not any more out of

his land, for the king of Babylon had taken from the river of Egypt even unto the river Euphrates, all that pertained to the king of Egypt."

Till after the capture of Babylon by Cyrus, Egypt seems to have enjoyed a quiet prosperity. But now the attention of the Persian king was drawn to the former rival of the conquered kingdom. It was rich and powerful—perhaps none the less that ambition of foreign conquest had been so effectually repressed. Foreign commerce had risen to unprecedented favor. Greek colonists settled on one of the mouths of the Nile. Greek and Phenician sailors bore the treasures of Egypt to European ports. Under Amasis, whose reign closed 526 B. C., the number of cities was estimated at twenty thousand, and this was long after the doom of Egypt had been pronounced by some of the Hebrew prophets. On the death of Cyrus, his son Cambyses undertook to execute his projects. Egypt fell under his power and was ravaged by his arms. For more than one hundred years (525–414 B. C.) it remained a province of the Persian empire, and it was during this period (460 B. C.) that the curious Greek traveler, Herodotus, "the father of history," visited it, noting its wonders and recording its priestly traditions and legendary lore.

The nation was restless under foreign dominion. Their revolts were frequent, but till 414 B. C. they were successfully repressed. At length, with the aid of Greek allies, the Persians were driven out, and the independence of the kingdom was vindi-

cated by a line of native rulers. Under Amyrteus, Egypt again rose to prosperity and power, and under him and his successors monuments were erected which in beauty and finish may vie with those of the earlier dynasties. Persian supremacy, however, was restored by the victorious arms of Artaxerxes III., in 353 B. C. Nineteen years later, victor and vanquished fell before the triumphant power of Alexander the Great.

Egypt willingly exchanged the Persian for the Grecian yoke (332 B. C.). Within her limits the conqueror designed to plant the capital of his world-wide empire. Alexandria was to be his memorial. Its foundations were laid, but death arrested the projects of the builder, and Egypt fell, upon the division of the empire, into the hands of one of his leading generals (323 B. C.). The dynasty of the Ptolemies now commenced. It continued for three centuries, and its rule was characterized by sagacity and moderation. Justice was administered with a good degree of impartiality.* Learning and science found a new home at Alexandria, where the famous library was founded by the first of the Ptolemies.† Upper Egypt was made safe for merchants

* The native Egyptians, however, were denied the privileges extended to the Greeks, and were made to feel that Alexandria was to them a foreign city.

† Lower Egypt, under the Ptolemies, or rather from the time of Alexander, became virtually a Greek kingdom; Alexandria was a Greek capital. The Septuagint version of the Hebrew Scriptures was written in Greek. The large public library gathered by the Ptolemies was founded in the Greek spirit. "Under their

and travelers. The port of Berenice was constructed on the Red Sea; Arsinoe was built where Suez now stands. The country was enriched with the commerce of foreign lands, and Jew and Greek taught in her schools. The famous Euclid was the head of the mathematical school, and the poets Theocritus, Callimachus, and Philotas were reckoned among the ornaments of the court. Alexandria, already a superb city, adorned with magnificent structures, invited the learning and science, as well as the trade and art of the civilized world. Jewish scholarship was welcome there, and with the king's sanction the sacred books of the Hebrews were translated into Greek, by the seventy-two learned men from whom (Septuagint) the version derives its name. Thus the very sentences of the prophets in which the doom of Egypt was foretold were transcribed for her libraries, and doubtless read in the palaces of her kings.

But the centuries of prosperity closed in anarchy. It was in vain that an Egyptian monarch could marshal an army of two hundred thousand foot and twenty thousand horse, and two thousand chariots; in vain that temples had been rebuilt or newly adorned, and a toleration extended to Jew and Greek even more than to Egyptians. Roman power was in the ascendant, and to Rome, as to her prede-

patronage, Theocritus, Callimachus, Lycophron and Apollonius Rhodius wrote their poems; Euclid wrote his Elements of Geometry; Apollonius of Perga invented conic sections; Hipparchus made a catalogue of the stars; Eratosthenes measured the size of the earth, Homer was edited, astronomy was studied.

cessors, Assyria and Babylon, Egypt, surviving them, was anew to bow (30 B. C.). The kingdom of the Pharaohs and Ptolemies sunk to the rank of a department of the great Roman Empire. It afterwards became largely Christianized, and its schools of philosophy and theology have left their impress on the religious thought and belief of Christendom. In 639 A. D. it fell before the prowess of the Arabs, and passed under Mohammedan sway. The Sultan of Turkey long held it in subjection, and when, in 1832, Mohammed Ali—in place of a rebellious pasha—became its monarch, the unhappy country simply passed from Turk to Turk, still yielding obedience to a foreign despot—a native, not of any Egyptian town or city, but of Kavala, a small seaport town of Macedonia.

A comparison of the history of Egypt with the language concerning it employed by the Hebrew prophets, reveals many striking points of correspondence, while a survey of its present condition helps to set forth the contrast between what it was when the prophets wrote and what they foretold that it should become. One of the specific declarations in regard to the future of the country which is frequently made is that it should cease to be an independent kingdom. This prophecy was uttered by Zechariah (x. 11), who coupled its doom with that of Assyria, and who says, "the pride of Assyria shall be brought down, and the sceptre of Egypt shall depart away." These words are supposed by

some to have been uttered about twenty years after the Jews returned from the Babylonian captivity, or B. C. 518, while Egypt was under Persian dominion; but it would seem more appropriate to give them a somewhat earlier date—the conquest of Cambyses occurring 525 B. C.—and to allow them to refer not only to a near approaching, but to a long subsequent period.

But Ezekiel (595–536 B. C.) had already declared (xxx. 13) that there should "be no more a prince of the land of Egypt,"* and the brief rebellion against Persian rule, as well as the period of fifty years beginning with Amyrteus, can scarce be regarded as an exception to the fulfillment of the prophecy. From that day to this Egypt has been subject to foreign sway. If there have been *native-born* princes, they all belonged to a foreign dynasty. It is a most remarkable fact. And yet when the prophecy was made, Egypt was an independent kingdom under a powerful monarch. The neighboring people of Lydia, Libya, and Ethiopia (xxx. 5), and "all the mingled people" "in league," might have seemed to assure its security. But they, too, were to fall along with Egypt before the invader. "They also that uphold Egypt shall fall,"† wrote the pro-

* "Thus saith the Lord God, I will also destroy the idols, and I will cause their images to cease out of Noph; and there shall be no more a prince of the land of Egypt; and I will put a fear in the land of Egypt."

† "Son of man, prophesy and say, Thus saith the Lord God, Howl ye, Wo worth the day! For the day is near, even the day of the Lord is near, a cloudy day; it shall be the time of the

phet, and we know that their aid was vain against Cambyses, and that to some extent they shared the fate of their ally.

"The day is near," wrote Ezekiel. His prophecy closed in 536 B. C., and in 525 Cambyses entered Egypt.* The vengeance of the Persian was marked and exasperating. It is even now a problem by what means he was able to effect his desolating work, and we cannot doubt that under him the prophecy was fulfilled that "the land should be waste from the tower of Syene to the border of Ethiopia." Herodotus gives us a forcible picture of the ravaging march of Cambyses's half-famished army.

It is possible that this fulfillment of the prophet's words had already taken place under Nebuchadnezzar, whose triumph is specifically foretold by Ezekiel. He was to have Egypt as his "reward" for the tedious siege of Tyre. For some twenty or thirty years the land was overwhelmed with a succession of disasters. The revolt of the Greeks, in-

heathen. And the sword shall come upon Egypt, and great pain shall be in Ethiopia, when the slain shall fall in Egypt, and they shall take away her multitude, and her foundations shall be broken down. Ethiopia, and Libya, and Lydia, and all the mingled people, and Chub, and the men of the land that is in league, shall fall with them by the sword. Thus saith the Lord, *They also that uphold Egypt shall fall;* and the pride of her power shall come down: from the tower of Syene shall they fall in it by the sword, saith the Lord God."

* If we refer this prophecy to an earlier date, the words become more emphatic. Ezekiel is said to have begun to prophesy in 595 B. C., and Nebuchadnezzar invaded Egypt before 570.

ternal dissension, fear and terror, and no doubt violence, filled up its cup of misery. Then may well have been fulfilled the prophecy (Ezek. xxx. 11, 12), that the land should be "filled with slain," "laid waste by strangers,"* and that the idols and images should be overthrown, as well as the cities burned and reduced to desolation. All this was foretold while Egypt (Ezek. xxxi.) aped the pride of Assyria and exulted in her strength, and the prophet pointed her to the sad but warning doom of her boastful rival.

At a still earlier date† (810–660 B. C.) the prophet Joel had foretold that Egypt should become a desolation, and Jeremiah (628–586 B. C.) had declared that the destruction (xlvi.) should come out of the north,‡ that the king of Egypt should be given into

* "Thus saith the Lord GOD, I will also make the multitude of Egypt to cease by the hand of Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon. He and his people with him, the terrible of the nations, shall be brought to destroy the land: and they shall draw their swords against Egypt, and *fill the land with the slain.* And I will make the rivers dry, and sell the land into the hand of the wicked, and I will make the land waste, and all that is therein, *by the hand of strangers*: I the LORD have spoken it."

† It will be observed that large allowance is made for the periods assigned to some of the prophets. This has been done, not because the author was in every case in doubt whether the period might not warrantably be reduced and made more definite, but in order to obviate any objections which might be urged on critical grounds. In some cases there are plausible reasons for assigning diverse dates to the same prophecy, and to the objector we are quite willing to concede even more than he can reasonably claim.

‡ "The daughter of Egypt shall be confounded: she shall be delivered into the hand of the people of the north. The LORD of hosts, the God of Israel, saith, Behold, I will punish the multi-

the hand of Nebuchadnezzar, and that he should have (xliii. 8) rule over the land. And then he added (xlvi.), that after this "Egypt should be inhabited again as in days of old"—a result accomplished before the Persian conquest, and again, subsequent to it, in the times of the Ptolemies.

Going back to a still earlier date, we read the words of the prophecy of Isaiah (810–698 B. C.) declaring (xxx. 3) that Judah should find it vain to trust in Egypt;* and this was exactly fulfilled when the nation sought an Egyptian alliance against the king of Babylon. At nearly the same time it was declared by the prophet (xx. 4) that the Assyrian should carry away "the Egyptians prisoners, and the Ethiopians captives, young and old, naked and barefoot;" and although we read of the extended conquests of Sargon, the Assyrian king, no history speaks of what we might naturally suppose must have taken place—the transfer of captive Egyptians to Nineveh. Yet, singularly enough, the remains

tude of No, and Pharaoh, and Egypt, with their gods, and their kings; even Pharaoh, and all them that trust in him: and I will deliver them into the hand of those that seek their lives, and into the hand of Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon, and into the hand of his servants: and afterward it shall be inhabited, as in the days of old, saith the LORD."

* "Wo to the rebellious children, saith the LORD, that take counsel, but not of me; and that cover with a covering, but not of my Spirit, that they may add sin to sin: that walk to go down into Egypt, and have not asked at my mouth; to strengthen themselves in the strength of Pharaoh, and to trust in the shadow of Egypt! Therefore shall the strength of Pharaoh be your shame, and the trust in the shadow of Egypt your confusion."

of Assyrian architecture, pottery and glass-making, as well as other arts which belong to this period, attest the decidedly Egyptian influence which prevailed at the Assyrian capital (Smith's History, I., 221), and which was undoubtedly due to Egyptian captives.

Isaiah also foretold what he did not live to see, the subjection of Egypt (xix. 4) to "a cruel lord and fierce king"—a prophecy fulfilled either in Nebuchadnezzar or Cambyses, or in both. The ascendancy of priestly rule, of which history speaks in connection with priestly kings, is also specifically declared (xix. 3). The anarchy and confusion, in which Egyptian should be against Egyptian, followed the invasion of Nebuchadnezzar.* We read again (Isa. xix. 8–10), "The fishers also shall mourn, and all they that cast angle in the brooks shall lament, and they that spread nets upon the waters shall languish; moreover, they that work in fine flax, and they that weave net-works shall be confounded. And they shall be broken in the purposes (foundations)

* "The burden of Egypt: Behold, the LORD rideth upon a swift cloud, and shall come into Egypt: and the idols of Egypt shall be moved at his presence, and the heart of Egypt shall melt in the midst of it. And I will set the Egyptians against the Egyptians: and they shall fight every one against his brother, and every one against his neighbor; city against city, and kingdom against kingdom. And the spirit of Egypt shall fail in the midst thereof: and I will destroy the counsel thereof: and they shall seek to the idols, and to the charmers, and to them that have familiar spirits, and to the wizards. And the Egyptians will I give over into the hand of a cruel lord; and a fierce king shall rule over them, saith the LORD, the LORD of hosts."

thereof, and all that make sluices and ponds for fish." In ancient times the area watered by the Nile was greatly extended by a complete system of irrigation. Only second in importance to the fertilizing power of the river was the abundance of its fish (Smith's Hist., I., 76), which were carefully preserved in great ponds connected with the river by conduits; but these works have long since fallen to decay, and the prophecy has been literally fulfilled. Nor has its fulfillment been less exact in the comparative disappearance, except in the marshes of the Delta, of the abundant vegetation of the river—the reeds that fringed its banks, and the lotus and other beautiful water-plants that floated on its surface. The prophet wrote (Is. xix. 5, 6), "And the waters shall fail from the sea, and the river shall be wasted and dried up. And they shall turn the rivers far away, and the brooks of defence shall be emptied and dried up; the reeds and flags shall wither. The paper-reeds by the brooks, by the mouth of the brooks, and everything sown by the brooks shall wither, be driven away and be no more." The paper-reeds, the famous papyrus especially, which served the old inhabitants for innumerable uses, especially boat-building, and had furnished the principal materials for literary records employed by the priestly scribes, and especially under the Ptolemies, has become almost, if not quite, extinct. The land once abounded with gardens or orchards and vineyards, and we still see on the monuments all the processes of gathering the fruits

and making the wine. "The cucumbers, melons, leeks, onions and garlic," for which the Israelites longed, indicate the exuberant fertility of Egypt in ancient times.

One might have supposed that this fertility, at least, would have continued—that, situated at the confluence of the great lines of traffic between the East and West, and fitted to become what it was afterward, the granary of Rome, the country in which the sagacity of Alexander located the destined capital (Alexandria) of his great empire could not fail to invite industry enough to keep it from being left uncultivated and neglected. But this was not the case, and whether the condition of things foretold by the prophets was realized in the time of Nebuchadnezzar or not, it has been since.

The fate of Egypt's idols and images was foretold by Ezekiel (xxx. 13). The traveler to-day has only to copy the prophetic record. The idols *are* destroyed. The images *have* ceased out of Noph (Memphis). Pathros, or Upper Egypt, *has* been made desolate. "Fire *has* been set in Zoan, and (this) one of the principal capitals or royal abodes of the Pharaohs is now the habitation of fishermen, the resort of wild beasts, and infested with reptiles and malignant fevers." Judgments *have* been executed in No* (Thebes), and the multitude of it *has*

* Diodorus deplores the spoiling of its buildings and monuments by Cambyses; Strabo speaks of the mutilation by him of many of the temples. Modern travelers speak of his terrible vengeance on Egypt.

been cut off. Sin (Pelusium) *has* seen great distress, and the pomp of the strength of Tahpanhes *has* ceased, while over the stones which Jeremiah once planted there (Jer. xliii. 10) Nebuchadnezzar *did* set up his throne.

The destruction of Egypt *did* come out of the north (Jer. xlvi. 20), by the hands both of Nebuchadnezzar and Cambyses. And yet the desolation was not to be like that of Tyre, or Assyria and Babylon. It was to lie waste (Ezek. xxix. 11) "forty years." Then its inhabitants were to be regathered (Ezek. xxix. 13), and it was to be inhabited (Jer. xlvi. 26), "as in the days of old." Still we read that it was to be "a base kingdom." "It shall be the basest of the kingdoms:* neither shall it exalt itself any more above the nations." It should "no more rule over the nations" (Ezek. xxix. 15).

All this has been remarkably and exactly fulfilled.

* Mr. Lane (Modern Egyptians) says: "The fellah, to supply the bare necessities of life, is often obliged to steal and convey secretly to his hut as much as he can of the produce of his land. To relate all the oppressions which the peasantry of Egypt endure from the dishonesty of the Ma-moors and inferior officers would require too much space. It would be scarcely possible for them to suffer more and live. The Pasha has not only taken possession of the lands of the private proprietors, but he has also thrown into his treasury a considerable proportion of the incomes of charitable and religious institutions, etc." This was written in 1835. Miss Martineau, writing in 1847, says: "The Pasha holds the whole land and river of Egypt and Nubia in fee simple, except so much as he has given away for its revenues to favored individuals." This was not the case then, but within the last four years the fourth part of Egypt has passed into the hands of its ruler.

Volney says, that for twenty-three centuries Egypt "has seen her fertile fields successively a prey to the Persians, the Macedonians, the Romans, the Greeks, the Arabs, the Georgians, and at length to the race of Tartars distinguished by the name of Ottoman Turks." "Wherever the cultivator enjoys not the fruit of his labor, he works only by constraint, and agriculture languishes. Wherever there is no security in property, there can be no industry to procure it, and the arts must remain in their infancy. Wherever knowledge has no object, men will do nothing to acquire it, and their minds will continue in a state of barbarism. Such is the condition of Egypt." He draws a vivid picture of extortion, degradation and misery, and adds: "This is a just picture of all the villages, and equally resembles the towns. At Cairo itself, the stranger on his arrival is struck with the universal appearance of wretchedness and misery. The crowds which throng the streets present to his sight nothing but hideous rags and disgusting nudities. Everything he sees or hears reminds him he is in the country of slavery and tyranny. Nothing is talked of but intestine troubles, the public misery, pecuniary extortions, bastinados and murders. There is no security for life or property. The blood of man is shed like that of the vilest animals. Justice herself puts to death without formality."* Well might he exclaim, "How are we astonished when we behold the present barbarism and ignorance of the Copts, de-

* Volney's Travels, p. 120.

scended from the profound genius of the Egyptians and the brilliant intelligence of the Greeks!"* The French infidel perhaps did not know that it had been all foretold long before.

Gibbon, scarcely less skeptical than Volney, has borne testimony almost equally significant: "A more unjust and absurd constitution cannot be devised than that which condemns the natives of a country to perpetual servitude, under the arbitrary dominion of strangers and slaves. Yet, such has been the state of Egypt above five hundred years. The most illustrious Sultans of the Baharite and Berzite dynasties were themselves promoted from the Tartar and Circassian bands; and the four-and-twenty beys, or military chiefs, have ever been succeeded, not by their sons, but by their servants." How exact the fulfillment of the prophecy that Egypt should be the basest of the kingdoms,† and that it

* Volney's Travels, p. 55.

† On this point the testimony of Miss Martineau is fully accordant with that of Volney and Gibbon. As to the moral condition of Egypt, she says:

"These two hellish practices, slavery and polygamy, which, as practices, can clearly never be separated, are here avowedly connected; and in that connection are exalted into a double institution, whose working is such as to make one almost wish that the Nile would rise to cover the tops of the hills and sweep away the whole abomination."—*Martineau's Eastern Life*, p. 265.

She contrasts also the condition of the ancient with that of the modern Egyptians:

"The old Pharaohs, *natives* of the Nile valley, raised their mighty palaces and temples by the hands of the captives they brought into slavery from foreign lands. Now we see the opposite case of a Greek ruler, his throne surrounded by foreigners,

should never be possessed of a native prince! Where, in the history of any other kingdom or nation, shall we find a parallel for this? And how remarkable is it that the fact should thousands of years ago have been precisely foretold that a nation that had for ages held the foremost position among the kingdoms of the world, and had subjected them to her sway, should no more rule, should no more have a prince of her land!

We may imagine ourselves sitting down to read the prophecy upon some ruined fragment of the colossal monuments of ancient Thebes. All around us is magnificent desolation. "No written account," says Stanley, "has given me an adequate impression of the effect, past and present, of the colossal figures of the kings. What spires are to a modern city—what the towers of a cathedral are to its nave and choir—that the statues of the Pharaohs were to the streets and temples of Thebes. . . One was the granite statue of Rameses himself. By some extraordinary catastrophe it has been thrown down, and the Arabs have scooped their mill-stones out of his face, but you can still find what he was—the largest statue in the world. . . Nothing which now exists in the world can give any notion of what the effect must have been when he

raising the monuments of his reign by the hands of the enslaved nation whom he calls his subjects."—*Ibid.*, p. 274.

Still further she remarks:

"The state of affairs does not seem to be mended by the Pasha's practice of giving away his villages—which is the same thing as giving away the people who inhabit them."—*Ibid.*, p. 273.

was erect. Nero towering above the Colosseum may have been something like it, but he was of bronze and Rameses was of solid granite. Nero was standing without any object; Rameses was resting in awful majesty after the conquest of the whole of the then known world." But with kindred astonishment the traveler surveys the majestic temples of Karnak and Luxor, with their pillars, columns and obelisks, some of them still erect, others prostrate and never again to be reared; or turns his eye to the western cliffs on the opposite side of the Nile, and reflects upon the rock-hewn tombs, which are really gorgeous palaces, in which the dust of the rich and great was destined to repose, and in which the art of man for thousands of years has clothed the repulsiveness of the sepulchre with the pomp of royal splendor. And yet, in the words of a more recent traveler, Thebes, with all its marvelous and gigantic remains of ancient art, "lies to-day a nest of Arab hovels, and crumbling columns and drifting sands."*

This is scarcely an exaggerated sample of a great portion of the land of Egypt. Its glory has departed. The first and oldest of the great kingdoms of the world, it still exists as a base kingdom, and subject to a foreign and despotic dynasty. The

* Wilkinson (Ancient Egyptians, I., 306) notes the mistake of those who ascribe the ruin of the country to the encroachments of the deserts. The plain watered b the Nile has become more extended than it was originally.

tourist that passes through it inevitably makes his journal a record of prophecy.*

* On several points the statements made in this chapter do not accord with what the reader finds in some of the authorities referred to in the margin. Where such discrepancy exists it is due to corrections made on the authority of W. C. Prime, Esq., whose explorations and studies with reference to ancient Egypt have been perfected by personal inspection of the country and its ruins. To his criticisms and suggestions the author takes pleasure in acknowledging his indebtedness.

5 *





NINEVEH AND THE ASSYRIAN EMPIRE.

A LITTLE more than a hundred years ago, Bishop Newton, in his work on the Prophecies, speaking of Nineveh, said: "There is at this time a city called Mosul situate upon the western side of the river Tigris, and on the opposite eastern shore are ruins of a great extent, which are said to be the ruins of Nineveh."* Just about fourscore years afterwards, a young Englishman, an enthusiastic traveler and explorer, turned his steps thitherward, resolved to determine the site of the most splendid capital of one of the oldest monarchies of the world, and unfold the mystery of its ruins. He little knew what was before him. For nearly two thousand years few had professed to know where Nineveh stood. History was full of its fame, but its ruin was so complete that the careless Be-

* Malte Brun, who composed his large work on Geography some fifty years since, remarks, concerning Nineveh (vol. 1. p. 341): "The village of Nunia, on the banks of the Tigris, opposite to Mosul, is ascertained to be the site of ancient Nineveh. Here are found a rampart and fosse four miles in circumference; but Mr. Kinnear believes these to belong to a city founded subsequently to the time of Adrian, so that Nineveh has left no trace now in existence."



Nineveh. Entrance passage to the Excavations of Nineveh. By Layard at Koyunjik.

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douin fed his flocks on the green soil around its grand mounds, and never dreamed what strange records and monuments were to be found beneath them.

But the keen eye of the English traveler detected enough in the artificial cliffs to kindle afresh all his enthusiasm as an explorer. The supposed tower of Babel at Babylon was only seven hundred and thirty-seven yards in circumference, but Kaleh Shergat, the first object to arrest his attention, had a circumference of four thousand six hundred and eighty-five yards, and the mound known as Koyunjik, two thousand five hundred and sixty-three yards. What was the character, what the history of these huge masses, displaying here and there, on their precipitous sides, square-cut and beveled stones that told of human labor and skill, of which tradition had no story to tell? Austen Henry Layard was resolved to extort an answer from the silent mounds, and his subsequent discoveries form one of the most romantic chapters of exploration in the history of the world.

A living empire had been conquered, and here was its grave. To open that grave, sealed by its own ruins for two thousand years, was a new victory scarcely less than the first. The labor, patience and energy required were almost incredible. Native superstitions and native insolence were to be overcome. Rivalries and jealousies were to be suppressed. The work of excavation was so vast, and the means at command so limited, as to tempt any

but a hero to despair. But Layard's enthusiasm was heroic. He persevered, and Assyrian palaces that had so long entombed their own splendor were opened to the light of day, and that magnificence which had made history seem like legend was revealed to the gaze of the world. Sculptured tablets, statues, royal inscriptions, varied and numberless, were discovered, and scenes that transpired three thousand years ago presented themselves as vividly as if only a single generation had intervened.

No one could any longer doubt the story of Assyrian greatness. It even seemed as if the half had not been told. Egypt might glory in her pyramids, her tombs and temples, but here were palaces that were cities—structures by the side of whose gigantic proportions the grandeurs of Greek and Roman architecture were dwarfed to insignificance—and in these palaces kings had feasted and reveled and received the tribute of distant nations. There was no exaggeration in the graphic picture of the Hebrew prophet (Ezek. xxxi. 3–8): "Behold, the Assyrian was a cedar in Lebanon; with fair branches, and with a shadowing shroud, and of an high stature; and his top was among the thick boughs. The waters made him great, the deep set him up on high, with her rivers running round about his plants, and sent out all her little rivers* to all the trees of the field. . . All the fowls of heaven made their nests in his boughs, and under his branches did all the beasts of the field bring forth their young, and un-

* The canals and tributaries of the Tigris.

der his shadow dwelt all great nations. The cedars in the garden of God could not hide him . . not any tree in the garden of God was like unto him in beauty."

Equally vivid is the prophet's picture of Nineveh's ruin. Its overthrow took place in the year 625 B. C. Ezekiel was perhaps a child then, and to him in his Jewish home may have come the report, thenceforth ever memorable, of the capture and sack of the great city. Perhaps he visited and saw its lingering but faded glories while an exile from his native land, and making his home on the banks of the Chebar. The figure of the "cedar of Lebanon" is still before us, but over its prostrate pride the voice of the King of kings is heard declaring (Ezek. xxxi. 10–17), "I made the nations to shake at the sound of his fall." "I have driven him out for his wickedness. Upon the mountains and in all the valleys his branches are fallen, and his boughs are broken by all the rivers of the land, and all the people of the earth are gone down from his shadow."

In all history there had been no such significant lesson before for prophets to interpret in the ear of guilty nations. A city that for forty generations—or, if we may credit the claim, for thirty more—had been the capital of a mighty empire—that had gathered to it the art and science, the wealth and the luxury of the world—that in strength and splendor was unrivaled, and into which was poured the tribute of subject nations and distant climes—was

hurled suddenly from the pinnacle of its greatness, and left like a prostrate cedar, shattered by the tempest, and by its fall humbled to the earth.

How strange the contrast of its prosperity and its overthrow! And how near do they meet together! No slow decay—according to the prophet—overtook the guilty city. It fell, as the monarch of the forest falls, in a moment. The memory of its magnificence was yet fresh when the features of its desolation were perfect. Singularly enough, the discoveries of Layard reveal the fact that the capture, sack and conflagration of Nineveh were, so to speak, the work of a day. It did not crumble to desolation. It fell as the "cedar of Lebanon" falls. One hour witnessed its pride, the next its humiliation.

This humiliation was so complete that the very site of the city was scarcely known for centuries. History and tradition located it on the banks of the Tigris, opposite Mosul, some two hundred and fifty miles north of ancient Babylon, or some two hundred north of Bagdad. But no remains like those of Thebes or Palmyra remained to indicate the spot where it once stood. No broken pillars or half-ruined temples or palaces were anywhere visible to betray the secret. Here and there were apparent hills or giant mounds, that might well have been mistaken, without close inspection, for natural elevations, and upon them the wandering Arab pitched his tent or herded his flocks.

Nearly four hundred and sixty years before Christ, the Greek traveler Herodotus spoke of the Tigris

as "the river on which the town of Nineveh *formerly* stood." In his journey to Babylon he must have passed near, perhaps over, its very site. But already the vestiges of its former glory had disappeared. About sixty years later, Xenophon, conducting the famous retreat of the ten thousand Greeks from Persia, must have encamped in its vicinity, but its name had now vanished, and he speaks merely of Larissa and the deserted town of Mespila as groups of ruins. Later historians, guided possibly by false traditions, located the city on the Euphrates. Hence Bochart supposed there were two, and Sir John Marsham that there were three Ninevehs. Lucian, in the second century after Christ, affirms that the city had utterly perished, and that its site was unknown. Later travelers believed they had traced its ruins. Benjamin of Tudela (1173 A. D.) located it just across the Tigris from Mosul, and Niebuhr and Rich drew attention to this locality. But for the most part the very site was considered as questionable, and for two thousand years the proud metropolis of the oldest kingdom of Asia was left to oblivion in its unnoted grave. It is but a little more than a quarter of a century ago since M. Botta, French Consul at Mosul, commenced his explorations. He was soon followed by Layard, who, on this—his second visit—not content with speculations on the character of the mounds, determined to bring forth their buried treasures to the light. The result exceeded his anticipations. He found in these enormous mounds, extending over

acres of ground, the remains of palaces in which the wealth of tributary nations had been gathered. Beneath the accumulated rubbish and decayed materials of the surface he met with some of the most wonderful monuments of ancient art. The religion, the history, the civilization of the old Assyrian empire stood displayed before him. Elegantly sculptured statues, some of them of immense proportions, were there; marble slabs, covered with delineations of ancient historic and social scenes, and sometimes portraying invading campaigns or memorable conquests, arrested his attention; vast halls or chambers adjoining one another, their walls ornamented with admirable sculptures, excited his admiration; and, evidently in explanation of their meaning, were inscriptions in the cuneiform (wedge-shaped) character—inscriptions that were perhaps already old when Moses wrote the Pentateuch, or Cadmus bore to Greece the Phenician alphabet.

Further explorations revealed new wonders. The first discoveries had been made at Nimroud, several miles below Mosul, on the eastern bank of the Tigris, but they were now made at Khorsabad, Koyunjik and Nebbi-Yunus (the Tomb of Jonah, so called), more nearly opposite Mosul. The huge sculptures, transported down the Tigris on rafts to Bagdad, and thence by vessels to England, excited the astonishment and curiosity of the learned world. To what age did they belong? Who reared or inhabited the palaces they adorned? What was the meaning of the strange inscriptions that were evi-

dently intended to explain the scenes sculptured on the marble slabs. Could these strange cuneiform characters be deciphered? What light would they throw on the history of the old Assyrian empire, so long buried in hopeless oblivion? Would the new discoveries accord with Scripture chronology and history? What sort of a people and what kind of a civilization did the long-buried remains of ancient art and the scenes which they commemorated indicate? Such were some of the questions that were now eagerly asked, and which pressed for a solution.

Some of them have been at least partially answered. But future research, pushing still further the exploration of the mine already opened, may add greatly to our resources of historic information, and enable us to trace more minutely that course of imperial conquest and domination by which Assyria rose for a time to the position of the ruling power of the world. Even now we can fill up some important gaps in her history, and trace the causes of her sudden, strange and lasting desolation.

In antiquity Assyria ranks second only to Egypt. Profane history makes this claim in her behalf, and it is confirmed by the Nineveh monuments and established by the sacred record. Cush, one of the sons of Ham (Gen. x. 8, 9), "begat Nimrod; he began to be a mighty one in the earth. He was a mighty hunter before the Lord; wherefore it is said, Even as Nimrod the mighty hunter before the Lord. And the beginning of his kingdom was Babel, and

Erech, and Accad, and Calneh, in the land of Shinar. Out of that land (he) went forth (to) Asshur (Assyria) and builded Nineveh." The name of Nimrod, equivalent to "the extremely impious rebel," indicates plainly enough the lawless violence with which he carried out his ambitious designs.

For fifteen hundred years Scripture makes no further mention of the Assyrian kingdom. We are left at liberty to identify, if we please, the Nimrod of the Bible with the Ninus of classical antiquity—the reputed founder of the Assyrian empire. The date assigned to the commencement of his career varies from two thousand one hundred and sixteen to two thousand two hundred and eighty-four years before Christ. From his own name we may plausibly derive that of his capital, Nineveh. The Roman historian, Justin, describes him in language that would be equally appropriate if applied to Nimrod. "First of all,"* he says, "Ninus, king of the Assyrians, changed the hereditary custom of these nations by his lust of empire." It may well be doubted, however, whether Ninus is the real name of a monarch. It seems more probable that he and his queen Semiramis simply embody the myths of early Assyrian greatness.† Of the early kings we have no historic knowledge. For hundreds of years, perhaps, they ruled over only a limited domain. At

* "Primus omnium Ninus, Rex Assyriorum, veterem et quasi avitum gentibus morem, nova imperii cupiditate mutavit. Hic primus intulit bella finitimis, et rudes adhuc ad resistendum populos, terminos usque Libyæ, perdomuit." Justin, His., I., 1.

† Rawlinson's Herodotus, I., 364.

length Babylon was separated from Assyria, and shortly after this, four successive kings, whose names have been recently discovered, ruled at Kaleh Shergat. They are known, however, only by the legends on bricks and vases that have been excavated from the mounds, and their succession must have closed previous to 1200 B. C. Six successive monarchs are supposed to occupy the next period of one hundred and fifty years—the crown descending from father to son. The fifth of these, Tiglath Pileser I., or the Tiger lord of Assyria, recorded on a cylinder the annals of his first five years, concluding his account by a glorification of his ancestors, whom he traced back to the fourth degree.

The successor of these, Asshur-adam-akhi, was nearly contemporary with David. One of his successors, the warlike Sardanapalus of the Greeks, was a great conqueror. He styles himself "the conqueror from the upper passage of the Tigris to Lebanon and the Great Sea, who has reduced under his authorities all countries from the rising of the sun to the going down thereof." The Northwest Palace at Nimroud, one of those explored by Layard, and, next to that of Sennacherib at Koyunjik, the largest and most magnificent of the Assyrian edifices, was erected by him, and from this building has been derived the largest portion of the sculptures in the British Museum. It was an immense structure, three hundred and sixty feet long and three hundred broad, and stood so as to overlook the Tigris. A single central hall was one

hundred and twenty feet long by ninety wide, around which were grouped chambers ceiled with cedar, probably from Lebanon, while the walls were paneled to a certain height by slabs of sculptured alabaster, and the floors were paved with slabs of stone, often covered with inscriptions. This structure vastly exceeded in its dimensions the famous temple of Solomon.

The next monarch was Shalmaneser. He reigned thirty-one years, and extended his conquests from the shores of the Caspian to the borders of the Southern ocean, and throughout Syria to the borders of Palestine. He was engaged in conflict with Ben-Hadad of Damascus, and with his successor, Hazael; and on a black obelisk belonging to his reign, which has recently been discovered, is recorded the fact that Yahua (Jehu), the son of Khumri (Omri), brought him tribute of silver and gold. His reign closed about 850 or 860 B. C., and the great central palace of Calah (Nimroud), which has furnished some of the most interesting specimens of Assyrian art, is a monument of his reign.

Two or three kings intervened before the accession of Iva-lush, whom some would identify with the Pul of Scripture. The records of his time are scanty, but among them is a pavement-slab from the upper chambers at Nimroud, which mentions his receiving tribute from the Medes, from Samaria, Tyre, Sidon, Damascus, Idumea and Palestine on the Western sea, thus according with the statement in 2 Kings, that Pul received from Menahem, king of Israel,

one thousand talents as tribute. Another inscription of his reign, giving Semiramis as the name of his wife, goes to confirm the correctness of Herodotus in his mention of the queen. His empire, we learn from similar records, extended also over Babylon, perhaps in right of his queen, Semiramis, who may have been a Babylonian princess.

But his long reign closed in disaster. We have no record of the causes which led to the dismemberment of the empire, but it seems probable that internal discontents prepared the way for the satrap of Babylon to assume an independent position, and for Tiglath Pileser II. to usurp the Assyrian crown—an event which marks what is known as the era of Nabonassar, 747 B. C. His reign of seventeen years was one of war and conquest. He invaded Babylon. He defeated Rezin, king of Damascus, and exacted tribute from the king of Samaria (called Menahem), from Hiram of Tyre, and the queen of the Idumeans. Twice he seems to have invaded Samaria, the second time at the request of Ahaz, father of Hezekiah. Judah thus became tributary to Assyria, for this was the price of the powerful alliance. The result was the defeat of Pekah of Samaria, as well as his ally Rezin, and the first captivity of Israel, about 740 B. C.

To Tiglath Pileser II. succeeded Shalmaneser, who reigned but nine years, and who invaded Samaria, then under Hosea, who had murdered Pekah, usurped the kingdom, and called, though in vain, on Egypt for aid. His successor, Sargon (721 B. C.),

completed the siege, and effected the capture of Samaria, carrying into captivity, according to his own account, twenty-seven thousand two hundred and eighty families. Although probably an usurper, he maintained his position, and it is possible that he placed Merodach-Baladan on the throne of Babylon. He exacted tribute from the king of Egypt, and subsequently invaded Upper Syria, Cappadocia and Armenia. He subdued Media, peopling it in part with Israelite captives, invaded Southern Syria, took Tyre, drove Merodach-Baladan, who had perhaps revolted, into banishment, and probably made an expedition to Cyprus. He removed his capital from Calah farther to the north, repaired the walls of Nineveh, and built in the neighborhood of that city the magnificent palace of Khorsabad, explored by M. Botta, which has supplied France with the valuable monuments now deposited in the Louvre.

The successor of Sargon was Sennacherib, whose accession dates 702 B. C., and whose reign extended down to about 680 B. C. He restored Nineveh, which had fallen into decay, called it "his royal city," and made it his place of residence. He is said to have employed three hundred and sixty thousand men, mostly captives, in effecting his repairs and enlargements, In two years Nineveh was made "as splendid as the sun;" two palaces were repaired; the Tigris was confined to its channel by a brick embankment; the ancient aqueducts were restored to their original use; and at length a new palace, that of Koyunjik, excavated by Layard,

was erected. It eclipsed all its predecessors: forty thousand square yards of its area have already been excavated, and thus more than eight acres of ground must have been covered by the immense structure.

Meanwhile Merodach-Baladan had regained the Babylonian throne. Sennacherib defeated him in battle, forced him to flee and conceal himself, destroyed seventy-nine Chaldean cities and more than eight hundred villages, and returning to Assyria with enormous booty, left Belibus as his viceroy at Babylon. Two hundred thousand captives followed his victorious train. He invaded Media, exacting tribute from tribes hitherto unknown, forced the king of Sidon to flee to Cyprus, and gave his throne to another; exacted tribute from the Phenician cities and the kings of Edom and Ashdod; defeated the king of Egypt, invaded Judea, took forty-six fenced cities, and carried off captive two hundred thousand of the subjects of King Hezekiah. Laying siege to Jerusalem, he forced the king to submit and pay a heavy tribute of silver and gold.

Next he invaded the region of Babylon (699 B.C.), and deposing Belibus, placed his son, Asshur-Nadin, on the throne. Hezekiah revolted from him in the hope of help from Egypt, and the invasion of Judea followed, as narrated in the Scriptures. But pressing on to vanquish Hezekiah's ally, and sending a threatening letter to the king of Judah, he only hurried to his ignominious overthrow—so inglorious as to find no place in his annals, although Herodotus gives the strange version of it which he had re-

ceived from the Egyptian priests. His powerful army perished in a single night. Egypt was left uninvaded, and the proud king of Assyria, with the remnant of his army, fled back to his capital, only to fall a victim to the murderous blows of his own sons. Several years of peace, however, may have intervened before the commission of the crime.

Esar-haddon, one of his sons, who had been viceroy of Babylon in place of his elder brother for some years, now (680 B. C.) succeeded to the throne. He, too, was a great conqueror and a great builder. Historical inscriptions show that he extended his invasions to the north-west farther than any of his predecessors. Bricks bearing his name have been discovered among the ruins of Hillah, near Babylon, where he repaired temples and built a palace. One inscription states that during his reign he built no fewer than thirty temples, "shining with silver and gold, as splendid as the sun." The south-western palace at Nimroud was built by him, its materials being taken in part from the buildings of some of his predecessors, for whom he seems to have entertained but small respect. Its central hall was two hundred and twenty feet long by one hundred broad, and, according to Layard, answers in its general plan, beyond any other building hitherto discovered, to the Temple of Solomon. Another of his palaces was on the spot now known as Nebbi-Yunus, or, the Tomb of Jonah, the large mound by which tradition commemorates the Hebrew prophet. It is described as supported

on wooden columns, and as roofed with lofty cedar and other trees.* Sculptures in stone and marble, and many images of silver, ivory and bronze—some of them brought from other countries, while others represented the Assyrian gods—served to adorn it, and so vast was its extent that horses and other animals were not only kept, but bred within its walls. Syrian, Greek and Phenician artists were employed upon these structures, and Hellenic monarchs, as well as the princes of Syria and Judah, furnished him the workmen to whose skill we are doubtless indebted for the sculptures.

Asshur-bani-pul II. succeeded Esar-haddon somewhere about 660 B. C., and with him the decline of the military power of the empire seems to have commenced. He appears to have patronized the arts, and there is a marked improvement in the sculptures of his reign. They are characterized by greater spirit, delicacy and freedom. But his conquests were rather those of peace than war, and his son, Asshur-emit-ili (640–625 B. C.), pursuing the same policy, only invited the invasion by which his empire was rent from him. According to Herodotus, the Medes assaulted Nineveh on repeated occasions, but the final catastrophe did not take place till 625 B. C. There are elements of Greek fiction doubtless in the story of his death, but all that we can absolutely determine is that the Assyrian palaces were in all probability destroyed by fire. This fact, however, gives some sanction to the report that the last

* Rawlinson's Herodotus, I., 388.

king, the Sardanapalus of the Greeks, who is represented as a royal voluptuary, was at last roused by the siege of Nineveh and a sense of his own personal danger to heroic efforts. He displayed unprecedented energy and courage, and for two years resisted the invader.* But the forces of the Medes were strengthened by the accession of the Babylonian forces under Nabopolassar, whom the king had appointed viceroy of Babylon, and who now revolted to the enemy. At the same time, a freshet in the Tigris swept away a portion of the city wall and allowed the foe to enter. Convinced that further resistance was hopeless, the king gathered his treasures in his palace, set it on fire, and perished himself in the ruins. The conqueror completed the desolation of the capital by razing the walls and burning the palaces which the king had spared. The same fate overtook the monuments of former kings at Khorsabad and Nimroud, as well as Koyunjik, which may, however, all have been included within the city walls. This is the last which history has to recount of Nineveh, except that the Roman Emperor Claudius vainly attempted to rebuild it.

The greatness of Assyria is attested, not only by the fame of her military prowess and her conquests, but by the testimony of her ruins. These confirm, by pictured sculpture, the story of her invasions, while they reveal, also, her progress in invention

* Justin, however, represents his efforts as a spasm of weakness, rather than a revival of heroic energy.

and art. It is true that the empire was a conglomerate of nations, a pile of loosely-cemented states, each retaining, for the most part, its own laws, customs, and religion, and only paying an annual tribute to the Assyrian monarch. This is, perhaps, the secret of its sudden dissolution. There was no common life pervading the whole body; the local was greater than the central attraction. But each country contributed its resources and its skilled labor to aggrandize the splendor of Assyrian palaces and trace the sculptures which commemorated its conquests. These sculptures, some of them now disentombed, while they reveal little of the life of the people, display the character of the nation and the victories and violent career of its monarchs. They present us vivid pictures of royal life, both in war and peace. The subject nations and the subject people are indeed of small account, merely fighting the monarch's battles, swelling the pomp of his processions, or serving as beasts of burden to erect the massive walls of the palaces or transport the colossal monuments. The monarch is represented as of gigantic stature, "clothed with the symbolic attributes and wielding the thunderbolts of the gods whose name he bore."* He leads his armies in their campaigns, crossing rivers, storming cities, using the embankment, the testudo, the boring spear, the battering-ram, or he returns with hosts of captives and the spoils of war. Again, he is seen engaged in hunting, piercing the lion or pursuing the fleet game,

* Smith's Hist., I., 217.

and to take the prey, and to tread them down like the mire of the streets. Howbeit, he meaneth not so, neither doth his heart think so; but it is in his heart to destroy and cut off nations not a few." How exact and vivid this picture of Assyrian ambition, the truthfulness of which is confirmed by the sculptures! But the doom of Assyria is also pronounced; and this, too, at a time when it had not yet reached the culmination of its greatness. "It shall come to pass that when the Lord hath performed his whole work upon Mount Zion and on Jerusalem, I will punish the fruit of the stout heart of the king of Assyria, and the glory of his high looks," &c. (Is. x.) And again, "Under his glory shall he kindle a burning, as the burning of a fire. It shall burn and devour his thorns and briars in one day." Subsequently his approaching ruin is depicted. His march to invade Judea is vividly sketched; but it closes with the declaration that the haughty shall be humbled, and Lebanon, to which Assyrian glory is compared, shall "fall by a mighty one."

The Assyrian invasion of Judea is also foretold in Isaiah viii., and in xiv. 25, we read, "I will break the Assyrian in my hand, and upon my mountains tread him under foot; then shall his yoke depart from off them, and his burden depart from their shoulders"—a most improbable result to human foresight, but one which was most completely and remarkably fulfilled. In Isaiah xxx. 31, the doom of Assyria is more definitely shadowed forth, for we are told that "through the voice of the Lord shall the Assyrian be beaten

down, which smote with a rod." In the next chapter we read (v. 9) that "the Assyrian shall fall by the sword;" "he shall flee from the sword, and his young men shall be discomfited, and he shall pass over to his stronghold for fear, and his princes shall be afraid," &c. We have little more than Greek tradition of the final scene, but we have seen already that it fully accords with the prophecies of Scripture.

Micah, in part contemporary with Isaiah, says (v. 6), "they shall waste the land of Assyria with the sword, and the land of Nimrod in the entrances thereof."

Zephaniah, who prophesied at a later date, and possibly both before and after the capture of Nineveh (640–609 B. C.), says (ii. 13), "He will stretch out his hands against the north, and destroy Assyria; and will make Nineveh a desolation and dry like a wilderness." The destruction of the dam across the Tigris, and of the elaborate methods of irrigation, has produced this very result. He proceeds (v. 14), "And flocks shall lie down in the midst of her, all the beasts of the nations; both the cormorant and the bittern shall lodge in the upper lintels of it; their voices shall sing in the windows; desolation shall be in the thresholds, for he shall uncover the cedar-work." Any one who has read Layard's description of the Arabs and their flocks, or his account of the desert aspect of the region during the summer heats, will appreciate the force of a portion of this language, and the rest may well have been fulfilled before the desolation had become so complete as it is now. Thus might the result

and to take the prey, and to tread them down like the mire of the streets. Howbeit, he meaneth not so, neither doth his heart think so; but it is in his heart to destroy and cut off nations not a few." How exact and vivid this picture of Assyrian ambition, the truthfulness of which is confirmed by the sculptures! But the doom of Assyria is also pronounced; and this, too, at a time when it had not yet reached the culmination of its greatness. "It shall come to pass that when the Lord hath performed his whole work upon Mount Zion and on Jerusalem, I will punish the fruit of the stout heart of the king of Assyria, and the glory of his high looks," &c. (Is. x.) And again, "Under his glory shall he kindle a burning, as the burning of a fire. It shall burn and devour his thorns and briars in one day." Subsequently his approaching ruin is depicted. His march to invade Judea is vividly sketched; but it closes with the declaration that the haughty shall be humbled, and Lebanon, to which Assyrian glory is compared, shall "fall by a mighty one."

The Assyrian invasion of Judea is also foretold in Isaiah viii., and in xiv. 25, we read, "I will break the Assyrian in my hand, and upon my mountains tread him under foot; then shall his yoke depart from off them, and his burden depart from their shoulders"—a most improbable result to human foresight, but one which was most completely and remarkably fulfilled. In Isaiah xxx. 31, the doom of Assyria is more definitely shadowed forth, for we are told that "through the voice of the Lord shall the Assyrian be beaten

down, which smote with a rod." In the next chapter we read (v. 9) that "the Assyrian shall fall by the sword;" "he shall flee from the sword, and his young men shall be discomfited, and he shall pass over to his stronghold for fear, and his princes shall be afraid," &c. We have little more than Greek tradition of the final scene, but we have seen already that it fully accords with the prophecies of Scripture.

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follow described in the next verse (15): "This is the rejoicing city, that dwelt carelessly, that said in her heart, I am, and there is none besides me: how is she become a desolation, a place for beasts to lie down in; every one that passeth by her shall hiss and wag his head."

If we turn now to the prophecy by Nahum (720–698 B. C.*), who wrote before the decline of Nineveh had commenced, we read (i. 8), "but with an overflowing flood will he make an utter end of the place thereof." The annual overflow of the Tigris has turned the pleasure-grounds of the royal palaces to marshes, and contributed doubtless to dissolve the vast masses of sun-dried bricks of which the walls of the city, and even of the buildings, were largely composed. The "end," also, was to be, as it has proved, "an utter end." The manner in which the city should be taken seems to be indicated. "The defence shall be prepared" (ii. 5), or the covering machine, the covering battering-ram used in sieges. "The gates of the rivers shall be opened, and the palace shall be dissolved" (ii. 6). This accords with the tradition that by a rise in the Tigris the walls were at length washed away to open a path to the invader. "Nineveh is of old like a pool of water;† yet they shall flee away. Stand, stand,

* Even Strauss allows Nahum to have prophesied between 680 and 667 B. C.

† Josephus quotes the prophecy of Nahum in the following language: "Nineveh shall be a pool of water in motion: so shall all her people be troubled and tossed, and go away by flight, while they say to one another, Stand, stand still, seize their gold and

shall they cry, but none shall look back. Take ye the spoil of silver, take the spoil of gold, for there is none end of the store and glory out of all the pleasant furniture. She is empty, and void, and waste; and the heart melteth, and the knees smite together, and much pain is in all loins, and the faces of them all gather blackness." Every one can see how exactly this vivid prophetic picture corresponds to what must have been the condition of Nineveh at the close of the siege and when a victorious army began its work of plunder.

Again we read (iii. 13), "Thy people in the midst of thee are women; the gates of thy land shall be set wide open unto thine enemies; the fire shall devour thy bars." It was evidently by fire that the fortified palaces of Assyria were for the most part destroyed. "Then shall the fire devour thee; the sword shall cut thee off. Thy crowned are as the locusts, and thy captains as the great grasshoppers which camp in the hedges in the cold day, but when the sun ariseth they flee away, and their place is not known where they are. . . Thy people are scattered upon the mountains, and no man gathereth them. There is no healing of thy bruise" (iii. 15–19). All this was exactly fulfilled. The people were "scattered;" the captains were as grasshop-

silver, for there shall be no one to wish them well, for they will rather save their lives than their money," &c. He adds, "all which things happened about Nineveh a hundred and fifteen years afterward." "The pool of water in motion," or the raging sea, is a vivid emblem of the confusion and terror of the captured city.

pers; the wound was incurable; the city was sacked, the images were cut off "out of the house of her gods."

The whole prophecy of Nahum, indeed, is devoted to the destruction of Nineveh. Its pictures are graphic with the terrors of invasion, siege, and capture. But under all the imagery and metaphor of the prophet we clearly discern the leading features of the final catastrophe. The river and the foe were combined to effect the ruin. It was, according to Diodorus, while the people were "drunken as drunkards" (Nahum i. 10), "while all the Assyrian army was feasting for their former victories, that those about Arbaces, being informed by some deserters of the negligence and drunkenness in the camp of the enemies, assaulted them unexpectedly by night; and, falling orderly on them disorderly, and prepared on them unprepared, became masters of the camp, and slew many of the soldiers and drove the rest into the city."

But, according to Nahum (ii. 6), "the gates of the rivers" were to be opened and "the palace dissolved." Diodorus states that in the third year of the siege, the river, swollen with the rains, overflowed a part of the city, and broke down twenty furlongs of the wall, and that then the king, frightened by the apprehension that an old prophecy, that the city should not be captured till the river became its enemy, was now fulfilled, built in his palace a large funeral pile, and burnt himself, as well as his wealth and his concubines, together with the palace

itself. The enemy, meanwhile, entering by the breach in the walls, captured the city. Thus, with "an overrunning flood" (i. 8), was "an utter end" made of much, at least, of Nineveh's glory, while (iii. 15) "the fire devoured her," and "the sword cut her off."

Nineveh, moreover, was to be spoiled and sacked (Nahum ii. 9). "Take ye the spoil of silver, take the spoil of gold," is the charge given to the invader. And thoroughly was it executed. The explorer, in his excavations, finds none remaining, although once there was "none end of the store and glory out of all the pleasant furniture." Nineveh is now (ii. 10) "empty, and void, and waste." For ages the prophetic record described her humiliation (iii. 7): "All they that look upon thee shall flee from thee and say, Nineveh is laid waste; who will bemoan her? Whence shall I seek comforters for thee?" "The voice of her messengers" (ii. 13), for long ages, has been "no more heard."

That the people were to be dispersed or carried away captive, to be distributed in different and distant regions, is fairly intimated in the language of Nahum (iii. 18). "Thy nobles shall dwell in the dust; thy people is scattered upon the mountains." This occurred upon the capture of the city, in accordance with the barbarous character of the age. In the prophecy of Zephaniah (ii. 13, 14) we have the picture of the ruins of the mighty capital. He "will make Nineveh a desolation and dry like a wilderness. And flocks shall lie down in the midst of her,

. . . both the cormorant and the bittern shall lodge in the upper lintels of it; their voice shall sing in the windows; desolation shall be in the thresholds, for he shall uncover the cedar-work." Thus she was to become, instead of "the rejoicing city" (iii. 15), "a desolation, a place for beasts to lie down in." This vivid description of what the traveler sees to-day could not be improved by his own pen. He has to borrow the very language of Scripture to set it forth. The canals, which once rendered the soil remarkably fertile, are now dry. The whole surrounding country, except after the periodic rains, is an arid waste. Flocks of sheep and herds of camels may sometimes be seen seeking scanty pasture among the mounds. The croak of "the cormorant and bittern" is heard from the reedy banks of the feeble streams that wind their way amid the ruins. When Layard first visited the lofty mounds that mark the site of the ancient palaces, he found numerous "hawks and crows" nestled in security upon their sides. By him, and other explorers, the cedar-work which adorned the ceilings of the palaces has been uncovered. Yet the prophecy in which all these things were foretold was uttered (640–610 B. C.), if not before the hostile forces destined for the overthrow of Nineveh were gathered, at least before the consummation of the work of ruin, as for nearly 2500 years it has been exhibited to the explorer's eye. The date of the prophecies which respect this proud metropolis of the ancient world are fixed beyond question or cavil. We can only say that the

language which they employ is too specific to allow us to believe that it could have been suggested by human foresight or sagacity.

Thus perished, and perished for ever, the doomed city, the recent discovery of whose splendid remains has astonished the world. It never recovered from the fatal blow foretold by the prophets and inflicted by the just providence of God. The capital of the mightiest, the most extended and splendid empire which the world had hitherto seen, it was destined to be buried for more than 2500 years in the grave of oblivion. Only within a few years have its palaces been excavated from their ruins, and the story of its pictured sculptures been told to the world. The history they give, in connection with their inscriptions, serves wonderfully to evince the accuracy of the Scripture record and ancient descriptions of Assyrian greatness. All can perceive how startling must have been the prophecies of its ignominious fate, and how improbable to ordinary human foresight was their accomplishment. Totally distinct in character from those which described the doom of Egypt or of Tyre, they have been exactly and literally fulfilled.





BABYLON.

THE time was when the stories of the old Greek traveler, Herodotus, were by many ridiculed rather than believed. He had visited the lands where Oriental fancy has luxuriated in the extravagance of fiction, and it was assumed that his own fancy, rather than reason, had guided his pen. His accounts were strange, wonderful—just what might be expected from one who had caught the tone of the "Arabian Nights." But of all his accounts, none was perhaps more difficult of belief than what he had to say of ancient Babylon. Its extent, according to him, was enormous. A half score of such cities as New York and Philadelphia might have found ample space within its walls. Those walls, too, might themselves be accounted one of the wonders of the world. Sixty miles in circuit, they rose to such a height that one might have looked down from their summit more than a hundred feet below him to the top of a monument as lofty as that of the granite pile on Bunker Hill. Within these walls were structures so vast and magnificent that the stateliest monuments of modern architecture



The Ruins of Babylon; perhaps of the Temple of Belus.

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would be only like the log-houses of the pioneer by their side.

And all this—much of which he asserts that he visited and examined for himself—was in a region of country now known as "Desert." The traveler who, from the Persian Gulf, ascends the Euphrates a distance of two hundred and forty miles to the north-west, comes to the modern city of Hillah, with a few thousand inhabitants. The river at this point is less than one-eighth of a mile wide, and Hillah itself is one of the least enterprising and attractive cities of the East. Yet its houses are built from the brick and rubbish gathered from mounds not far distant, across the stream; and each of those bricks, more than two thousand years old, has a story to tell as strange as any on the page of Herodotus; for on each of them has been traced an inscription that preserves the name of an ancient monarch, and that monarch the king of Babylon; and each of them was taken from ruins which even in their decay proclaim the control of an amount of "naked human strength" which no modern ruler or tyrant, not even the Czar of all the Russias, could command.

Modern travelers have restored to Herodotus his long-lost credit. The remains of ancient grandeur which still mark the former site of Babylon rebuke our incredulity. At some remote period it was densely occupied by an industrious and thrifty people. It was covered over with villages, and towns, and cities. It presented a scene of green fields and

bounteous harvests—of monuments of civilization, enterprise, and art. The traces of ancient wealth and prosperity are abundant, "mounds of earth, covering the ruins of buildings or the sites of fenced stations and forts, are scattered far and wide over the plains. When the winter rains furrow the face of the land, inscribed stones, graven pottery, and masses of brickwork, the certain signs of former habitation, are everywhere found by the wandering Arab."* The remains of ancient culture are also visible. The dry beds of enormous canals and countless water-courses are spread like an immense network over the face of the country. Even one familiar with the achievements of modern civilization is filled with surprise and admiration as he gazes upon these gigantic works, these lingering evidences of industry, skill, power and wealth.

Mere curiosity might tempt one to inquire into the history of these monuments of ancient industry and the causes of this widespread desolation. But this curiosity is quickened when the traveler notes the giant mounds, beneath which are buried such immense masses of masonry that our modern palaces seem like hovels by their side; and another emotion besides curiosity impels to investigation when we are told that these vast desolations and these immense ruins were depicted by anticipation more than two thousand years ago, just as the traveler describes them to-day, and that the latter borrows the very

* Layard's Nineveh and Babylon. 543.

words of the prophets as most appropriate to set forth the scenes that meet his eye.

Who were the builders and owners of these extensive works and monuments, and what fate has overtaken them? The study of their remains carries us back to the obscurity of centuries that have no other record. Tradition locates here, and even identifies with the Babel of the ruins, although probably on insufficient grounds, the famous Tower of Babel erected on these plains of Shinar almost immediately after the Flood. The name of Babylon is doubtless derived from the name of the tower, whether we accept it from the Hebrew, and render it "confusion," or study its native etymology and translate it the "gate of God." At the time of its erection, or soon after, the vast plains around it were thickly peopled. The region to the south, in the direction of the Persian Gulf, according to Loftus, was crowded with population; and if even now the remains of the dead which are still to be found there in a partial state of preservation, were restored to life, it would be densely inhabited. Of this region, although it may have been that several centuries first intervened, Babylon at length became the capital. The native historian, Berosus, seems to have possessed authentic records of his country for a period of at least two thousand years before the time of Alexander, thus carrying his meagre account up to a time not long subsequent to the date usually assigned to the Deluge. In accordance with this fact, Scripture represents the "beginning of the

kingdom" as belonging to the time of Nimrod, of whom no trace has been found in the Babylonian remains, although it is barely possible that he may be identified with the Bel of the Babylonians and the Belus of the Greeks.

But even at this early period civilization had made some progress. Idolatry and polytheism belong to a later age. We are now warranted in inferring that the Assyrians, and the Babylonians, who were neighbors and kindred to them, "worshiped one supreme God, as the great national deity, under whose immediate and special protection they lived and their empire existed."* This deity was known among the different nations by different names, as Asshur among the Assyrians, and Nebo among the Babylonians; but the very fact that his name is embodied in the royal titles, as *Nab*opolassar and *Neb*uchadnezzar, indicates his supremacy as the national deity, and gives evidence in favor of the early origin of a nation that received its knowledge of the one God by tradition directly from the survivors of the Deluge. The Baal of the Moabites and Phenicians is at length introduced as the Bel of the Babylonians, and thenceforth we have the tower of Belus, of which Herodotus makes mention, and the incorporation of the name, as in the case of Belshazzar, in the royal titles.

As early as the twentieth century before Christ, we meet, not at Babylon, indeed, but at Mugheir and Wurka, in its vicinity, with specimens of ancient art. From the explored ruins of these cities we find

* Layard's Nineveh and Babylon, 543.

that even then kiln-burnt as well as sun-dried bricks were in use, that writing was employed—for on these bricks are stamped the names and titles of the kings—and that buttresses were used in the erection of buildings, thus showing that the people were not strangers to the art by which the Tower of Babel was erected, stage after stage, to an imposing height.

Anterior to the time of Abraham, Babylon was subjected to the neighboring kingdom of Elam or Susiana. But already there had been a native Chaldean dynasty of eleven kings, reigning, according to Berosus, from 2234 to 1976 B. C. This closed, perhaps, with the invasion of Chedorlaomer, whose dynasty continued, as is supposed, for 450 years. But for about twelve centuries the history of Babylon is almost a blank. The names of fifteen or sixteen kings have been discovered on the monuments,* and it is possible, from the multiplicity of inscriptions, that others will yet be recovered. But their work must be summed up in comparatively unimportant conquests and the erection of the structures with which their names are identified.

As Assyria rose to eminence, she borrowed largely from Chaldean art.† The best part of the old civilization seems to have fallen to her share. The Assyrians adopted Babylonian architecture and writing. By their cultivation of arithmetic and astronomy, and the application of these sciences to the uses of common life, the Chaldeans seem to have left the most permanent impress upon succeeding

* Smith's Hist. of the World, I., 207. † Ibid., I., 210, 211.

ages. By them, doubtless, the heavens were first mapped out and the stars named. To their astronomical records we are greatly indebted for an approximation to a correct chronology of those remote ages. The systems of weights and measures throughout the civilized world are based more or less on their inventions. Their denominations of numerical quantity advance by multiples of ten and six alternately. They probably invented the nomenclature which we use for the seven days of the week, and measured time by the water-clock. Their calculation of lunar eclipses, attested by Ptolemy, gives us a favorable idea of their progress in civilization.

Yet for six hundred and fifty years before the fall of Assyria, which occurred 625 B. C., the power and splendor of the Babylonian kingdom were overshadowed by the glory of Nineveh, and the nation, doubtless, was held in subjection, during a considerable portion of the period, by the Assyrian conquerors. Still, Babylon was powerful and often restless, not to say rebellious. With the era of Nabonassar (747 B. C.) it may have attained independence under a native ruler; but not long after, one of his successors, the Merodach-Baladan of Scripture, is vanquished and expelled, and Assyrian viceroys hold the sceptre till Esar-haddon assumes it (680–667 B. C.) in person. Under his successor it seems not improbable, as reported, that the danger of Assyria from the Medes led to the appointment of Nabopolassar as commander of a part of the imperial forces and viceroy of Babylon; but, betraying his

trust, he conspired and co-operated with the Medes, and, on the overthrow of Nineveh, received as his share of the victory the independent sovereignty of the Babylonian kingdom.

The fall and ruin of Nineveh left the field open to its more fortunate and victorious rival. The supremacy of the East was now transferred to Babylon. The whole region between the Euphrates and Egypt was open to her ambition. During a reign of twenty-one years (625–604 B. C.) Nabopolassar was engaged in extending and consolidating his kingdom. Several years before his death, his son, Nebuchadnezzar, was placed at the head of his armies. The latter, shortly before his succession to the throne, came into collision with Pharaoh-Neko, king of Egypt, who had defeated and slain Josiah, king of Judah, at Megiddo, and had set up in his place a new and tributary king. The defeat of Neko, the reconquest of the lands to the border of Egypt, and the submission of Jehoiakim rapidly followed, when the death of his father vacated the throne for the youthful but mighty conqueror.

And now were undertaken those great works which gave Babylon a splendor that it had never before possessed, and amid the ruins of which occur those inscriptions which remind us so emphatically of the language which Scripture represents Nebuchadnezzar as having employed: "Is not this great Babylon that I have built, for the house of the kingdom, by the might of my power, and for the honor of my majesty?" His successors were altogeth

inferior to himself, and under the last of them, Nabonadius, who, while absent in command of his armies, left Belshazzar in the city to hold it against Cyrus, Babylon was captured.

Yet it did not immediately perish. Its fate was quite distinct from that of the sudden and complete desolation to which Nineveh, its older rival, was doomed.* Under the Persian kings it held the rank of at least a secondary capital. It suffered, no doubt, through invasion, violence, and neglect; but it still remained a large, wealthy, important, and populous city.

It was during this period of the Persian domination that the city was visited by that curious and inquisitive traveler, Herodotus. He tells us of its immense size and splendor, even in his day; of its walls sixty miles in circumference, and the deep moat around them. He says (Rawlinson's Herodotus, I., 245): "And here I may not omit to tell the use to which the mound dug out of the great moat was turned, nor the manner in which the wall was wrought. As fast as they dug the moat, the soil which they got from the cutting was made into bricks, and when a sufficient number were completed, they baked the bricks in kilns. Then they set to building, and began with bricking the borders of the moat, after which they proceeded to construct the wall itself,

* "Within twenty-five years after the death of Nebuchadnezzar (?), the royal seat of the empire was removed from thence to Shushan by Cyrus, which did put an end to the growing glory of Babylon, for after tha it never more flourished."—*Prideaux's Connections*, I., 98.

using throughout for their cement hot bitumen, and interposing a layer of wattled reeds at every thirteenth course of the bricks. On the top, along the edges of the wall, they constructed buildings of a single chamber, facing one another, leaving between them room for a four-horse chariot to turn. In the circuit of the wall are a hundred gates, all of brass, with brazen lintels and door-posts. The bitumen used in the work was brought to Babylon from the Is, a small stream which flows into the Euphrates at the point where the city of the same name stands, eight days' journey from Babylon. Lumps of bitumen are found in great abundance in this river.

"The city is divided into two portions by the river which runs through the midst of it. This river is the Euphrates, a broad, deep, swift stream, which rises in Armenia and empties itself into the Erythrean sea. The city wall is brought down on both sides to the edge of the stream; thence from the corners of the wall there is carried along each bank of the river a fence of burnt bricks. The houses are mostly three or four stories high; the streets all run in straight lines, not only those parallel to the river, but also the cross streets which lead down to the water-side. At the river end of these cross streets are low gates in the fence that skirts the stream, which are, like the great gates in the outer wall, of brass, and open on the water.

"The outer wall is the main defence of the city; there is, however, a second inner wall, of less thickness than the first, but very little inferior to it in

strength. The centre of each division of the town was occupied by a fortress. In one stood the palace of the kings, surrounded by a wall of great strength and size; in the other was the sacred precinct of Jupiter Belus, a square enclosure two furlongs each way, with gates of solid brass, which was also remaining in my time. In the middle of the precinct there was a tower of solid masonry, a furlong in length and breadth, upon which was raised a second tower, and on that a third, and so on to eight. The ascent to the top is on the outside, by a path which winds round all the towers. When one is about half-way up, one finds a resting-place and seats, where persons are wont to sit some time on their way to the summit. On the topmost tower there is a spacious temple, and inside the temple stands a couch of unusual size, richly adorned, with a golden table by its side. There is no statue of any kind set up in the place, nor is the chamber occupied of nights by any one but a single native woman, who, as the Chaldeans, the priests of this god, affirm, is chosen for himself by the deity out of all the women in the land."

Other and later accounts of Babylon reduced the extent of the city and the size of the walls. Perhaps the outer and higher wall had been thrown down, and even the interior one in part demolished; but even thus the statements which have reached us almost exceed belief. According to the most reliable authority, the outer walls of Babylon were from twelve to fifteen miles on each of the four sides, and,

including the moat, over three hundred feet high and eighty-seven feet thick. Much of the space thus inclosed, however, was open ground and fitted for cultivation; it was thus prepared to furnish the means for enduring a protracted siege.* The interior of the city was cut up by the intersection of the streets, half of them from east to west and the other half from north to south, into 676 squares, in each of which was contained about 28,000 square rods. The banks of the river were fortified, as it flowed through the city, by a wall on either bank, in which were gates fronting the principal streets.

The palace—the ruins of which are now known by the name of *Kasr*—was built by Nebuchadnezzar, somewhere about 600 years before Christ. The bricks of which it is built bear his name inscribed upon them. This palace, with its inclosure, on the east side of the river, was six miles in circumference, and was surrounded by three walls, rendering it thus an almost impregnable fortress. Three brazen gates gave entrance to it from the city. These, as well as the vessels of gold and silver which adorned the palace, were formed from the materials of which Jerusalem had been plundered. The hanging gardens were reckoned, even by the Greeks, as one of the wonders of the world. The mountain scenery of her native country, Ecbatana, was, for the queen's gratification, here reproduced on the alluvial plains of Babylon. An artificial mountain, 400 feet high,

* Its area must have been nearly five times the size of London at the present day.

was constructed, and terraced on all sides at certain distances. These terraces were reared and sustained on sets of piers, and rose in succession one above the other. Water was raised by machinery from the Euphrates to irrigate the soil. Here grew lofty trees, so that, viewed from a distance, the scene was like that of a natural forest crowning the precipices of a mountain.

No doubt the immense labor necessary to execute these great works of the then capital of the world was the forced labor of captives whom Nebuchadnezzar carried back with him, by the hundred thousand, from his extended conquests. We can scarcely wonder at the pride with which he surveyed the magnificence around him, or at the profound security, as well as haughty disdain, with which his successors regarded the threat of invasion.

But Cyrus, who knew of the immense lake north of the city, which had been excavated to receive the waters of the Euphrates while the walls along the river were building, had laid his plans for its capture.

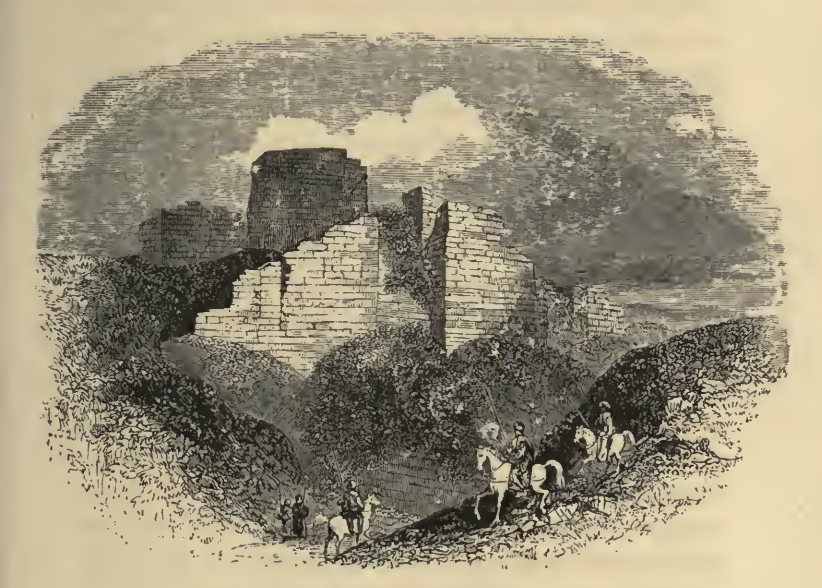
"He placed a portion of his army," says Herodotus (Rawlinson's Herodotus, I., 254), "at the point where the river enters the city, and another body at the back of the place where it issues forth, with orders to march into the town by the bed of the stream as soon as the water became shallow enough : he then himself drew off with the unwarlike portion of his host, and made for the place where Nitocris dug the basin for the river, where he did exactly what she had done formerly ; he turned the Euphrates

by a canal into the basin, which was then a marsh, on which the river sank to such an extent that the natural bed of the stream became fordable. Hereupon the Persians, who had been left for the purpose at Babylon by the river side, entered the stream, which had now sunk so as to reach midway up to a man's thigh, and thus got into the town. Had the Babylonians been apprised of what Cyrus was about, or had they noticed their danger, they would not have allowed the entrance of the Persians within the city, which was what ruined them utterly, but would have made fast all the street-gates which were upon the river, and, mounting upon the walls along both sides of the stream, would so have caught the enemy, as it were, in a trap. But as it was, the Persians came upon them by surprise, and so took the city. Owing to the vast size of the place, the inhabitants of the central parts (as the residents of Babylon declare), long after the outer portions of the town were taken, knew nothing of what had chanced, but as they were engaged in a festival, continued dancing and reveling until they learnt the capture but too certainly."

It was thus that the proud city was overtaken by her doom, and the words of prophecy were in part fulfilled: "I will open before thee the two-leaved gates, and the gates of brass shall not be shut." The gates were doubtless burned down by order of Cyrus, and the outer walls of the city were so far leveled as to be thenceforth useless; but the ruin was by no means like that of Nineveh.

Babylon remained in all probability the second city of the Persian empire till the time of Alexander's conquests. While he lived, he is said to have made it the capital of his extended empire, and to have purposed to restore it to its ancient splendor. But amid the dissensions of his successors another place was selected as the capital of this portion of his dominions, and thenceforth Babylon rapidly declined. Seleucia became its more fortunate rival, and was built up largely out of its ruins, its very materials being removed and employed in the construction of the new city. And now Babylon became indeed "heaps," and the very letter of prophecy was fulfilled in its desolation. "The ordinary houses rapidly disappeared; the walls sank, being either used as quarries, or crumbling into the moat from which they had risen; only the most elevated of the public buildings retained a distinct existence, and these shrunk year by year, through the ceaseless quarrying.* The river, in the time of freshets, wearing away upon its right bank, hastened the work of desolation, and the slow decay of ages has done the rest. We may rather be surprised at the vastness of the ruins that remain than that they are not more imposing than they are. Those near Hillah—mainly on the opposite side of the river—extend over a space about three miles long and rather more than two miles broad, and are in some parts 140 feet above the level of the plain. They still furnish building materials to all who dwell in

* Rawlinson's Herodotus, I., 427.



The Mujelibe; Babylon.

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the vicinity, and the marks of human ravage are more conspicuous than those of time.

Let us now see what a change has passed over the scene:

"The plains between Khan-i-zab and the Euphrates," says Layard (Nineveh and Babylon, p. 409), "are covered with a perfect network of ancient canals and water-courses; but 'a drought is upon the waters of Babylon, and they were dried' (Jer. l. 38). Their lofty embankments, stretching on every side in long lines until they are lost in the hazy distance, or magnified by the mirage into mountains, still defy the hand of time, and seem rather the work of nature than of man. The face of the country, too, is dotted with mounds and shapeless heaps, the remains of ancient towns and villages." Still further south, "between Musseiyib and the ruins of Babylon, the country abounds in dry canals and ancient mounds."

As the traveler approaches from the north the site of ancient Babylon, he sees in the distance what appears as "a huge hill." On a nearer approach, its flat, table-like top and perpendicular sides, rising abruptly from an alluvial plain, show it to be the work of man, and not a natural elevation. Around it may be plainly distinguished great embankments, the remains of walls and canals. It is the mound of Babel, the first great ruin which greets the eye of the traveler, and which is often designated as Mujelibe, or the "overturned." It was explored by Layard in the winter of 1850, but he failed to make any important discovery. The vast mass, composed

of brick—with the exception of a few piers and walls of a more solid structure—is about 200 yards long by 140 broad, and rises to a height of nearly 140 feet, affording from its summit the best view to be obtained of the other ruins.

Leaving this giant mound to the north, the traveler follows a route parallel with the course of the Euphrates, at some distance east from the river, noting, as he proceeds, long, undulating heaps of earth, bricks and pottery. Shapeless piles of rubbish cover for many an acre the face of the land.

"The lofty banks of ancient canals fret the country like natural ranges of hills. Some have long been choked with sand, others still carry the waters of the river to distant villages and palm-groves. On all sides fragments of glass, marble, pottery, and inscribed brick are mingled with that peculiar nitrous and blanched soil, which, bred from the remains of ancient habitations, checks or destroys vegetation, and renders the site of Babylon a naked and hideous waste. Owls start from the scanty thickets, and the foul jackal skulks through the furrows. Truly, 'the glory of the kingdom and the beauty of the Chaldees' excellency is as when God overthrew Sodom and Gomorrah. Wild beasts of the desert lie there.'"

The contrast between what Babylon was—not only in the times of the prophets who foretold its doom, but for long centuries afterward—and what it is to-day, is most striking. Herodotus, who wrote more than two hundred years after the time of Isaiah, declared that he knew not how to speak of the won-

derful fertility of the soil of Babylonia, and that if he should state what he actually saw of its harvests, it would exceed belief. Strabo and Pliny, four centuries later, speak in a similar strain. Its productiveness, even after the Persian invasion, was wonderful. It supplied horses for the army, and sustained 17,000 horses for the sovereign's use. Exclusive of monthly subsidies, it furnished one-third of what was procured, for the subsistence of the king and his army, from an empire that extended from the Hellespont to India. In the first century of the Christian era, Babylon still contained, it is said, a population of 600,000. Speaking of the fertility of the plains to the north, between Babylon and the site of ancient Nineveh, some centuries later, Gibbon remarks: "The adjacent pastures were covered with flocks and herds; the paradise, or park, was replenished with pheasants, peacocks, ostriches, roebucks and wild boars, and the noble game of lions and tigers was sometimes turned loose for the golden pleasures of the chase. Nine hundred and sixty elephants were maintained for the use of the great king. . . Six thousand guards successively mounted before the palace gates. . . The various treasures of gold, silver, gems, silks and aromatics were deposited in a hundred subterranean vaults." In the Middle Ages, the great towns to the north of Babylon, which had succeeded to its wealth and fortunes, "formed, so to speak, one street of twenty-eight miles."*

* Malte Brun, quoted by Keith.

South of the great mound of Babel, or Mujelibe, at a considerable distance, is the mound of the Kasr, which marks the site of the great palace of Nebuchadnezzar. It forms an irregular square, nearly 700 feet on each side, and the walls of this huge mass are composed of burnt bricks, finely cemented, on each of which are stamped the name and titles of the royal builder.* Still further south, and not far distant from the river, is the mound of Amram, which some, probably without sufficient reason, have identified with the "hanging gardens" of Nebuchadnezzar. It has been described as an irregular parallelogram, 1100 yards long by 800 broad, and the inscriptions on its ruins are those of kings more ancient than the builder of the Kasr.

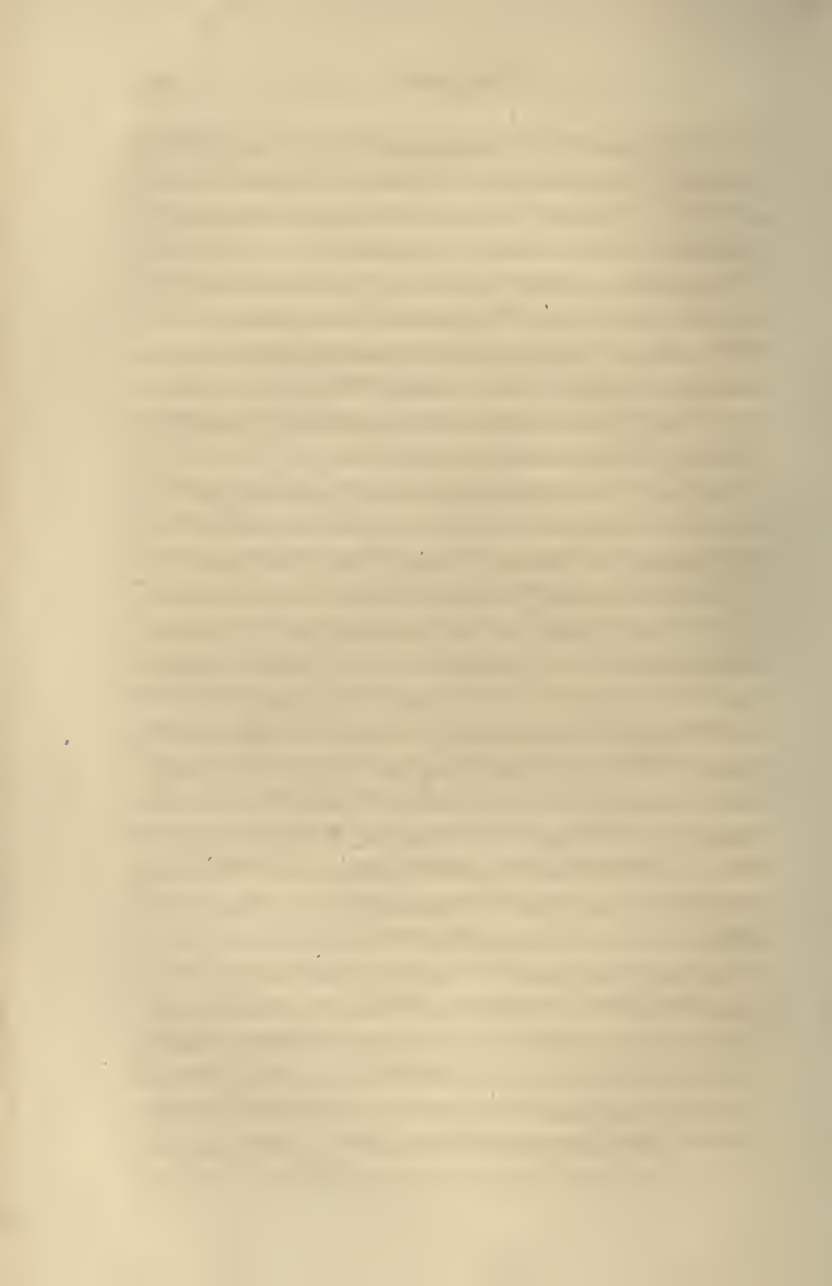
Other enormous mounds and lines of elevated ruins, extending in some cases like the streets and buildings of a great city, are to be found at no great distance from these more giant ruins, and the whole is inclosed within a triangular space, having the

* This "fragment of ancient brick masonry" owes its preservation to the difficulty experienced in demolishing or quarrying from it. The bricks, strongly fixed in fine cement, resist all attempts to separate the several layers. They "contain traces of architectural ornament—piers, buttresses, pilasters," &c., and in the rubbish at their base have been found slabs inscribed by Nebuchadnezzar, and containing an account of the building of the edifice, as well as a few sculptured fragments and many pieces of enameled brick of brilliant dyes. No plan of the palace can be made out from the existing remains (Smith's Dic. Babylon). Not far from this edifice is the well-known block of basalt, roughly cut to represent a lion standing over a human figure. This, together with a fragment of frieze, are the only instances of *bas-reliefs* hitherto discovered in the ruins.



The Birs Nimroud; on the west bank of the Euphrates, below Babylon.

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river for its more extended base, and two parallel lines of ramparts, like vast lines of crumbled walls, for its two sides, which meet at right angles, some two or three miles to the east of the river. Here we have, in all probability, the palaces of ancient Babylon, the city within the city, and the remains of its double line of fortifications. Outside of this inclosure there are, indeed, lesser ruins, but they are merely low heaps and embankments scattered irregularly over the plain (Layard, 419, 420).

Passing still onward, the traveler discerns on his left "the pyramidal mass of El Heimar," and away to his right, on the south-west, across the Euphrates, "the still more extraordinary pile of Birs Nimroud." These "rise from the surrounding plain like two mighty tumuli designed to mark the end of departed greatness. Midway between them the river Euphrates, wending her silent course toward the sea, is lost amid the extensive date-groves which conceal from sight the little Arab town of Hillah. All else around is a blank waste, recalling the words of Jeremiah: 'Her cities are a desolation, a dry land and a wilderness—a land where no man dwelleth, neither doth any son of man pass thereby.'"

Six miles south-west of Hillah stands the great pile called Birs Nimroud. It lies on the edge of a vast marsh formed by the waters of a canal and the periodical floods of the Euphrates. The Arabs call it Nimrod's palace, and the Jews, Nebuchadnezzar's prison. Old travelers believed it to be the very ruins of the Tower of Babel, while by some it was sup-

posed to represent the temple of Belus, the wonder of the ancient world, and by other the site of Borsippa, a sacred place of the Chaldeans. Whatever it was once, it is now "a vast heap of brick, slag and broken pottery," overspread by desert winds with the dry, nitrous earth of the parched plain, in which no green thing will take root or grow. Its height is nearly 200 feet, and on its summit is a compact mass of brickwork 37 feet high by 28 broad, so that the immense mass rises to about 235 feet.

The ruin is too complete to allow us to judge of the original object of the structure, while it is obvious that it is too solid for the walls of a building. It is pierced by square holes, apparently made to admit air. On one side lie vast fragments, rent off, perhaps, by the lightning, from the crowning masonry.

The old Jewish traveler, Benjamin of Tudela, who visited it in A. D. 1173, says: "A spiral passage built into the tower (from ten to twelve yards) leads up to the summit, from which there is a prospect of 20 miles, the country being one wide plain and quite level. The heavenly fire which struck the tower split it to its very foundation." This mention of the spiral passage—though all traces of it have long since disappeared—reminds us of the description by Herodotus of the famous temple of Belus. Whether it can be identified with it or not, it took at least its final form under the direction of, and possibly was originally constructed by Nebuchadnezzar. Every inscribed brick, among the thousands and tens of

thousands taken from it, bears the name of this king. These bricks also are kiln-burnt, and thus incomparably more durable than the sun-dried bricks of Assyrian structures, while fragments of stone, marble and basalt, scattered among the rubbish, show that other materials were used to adorn it. The cement of the bricks was so tenacious that even now it is next to impossible to detach one from the mass.

Around the tower are heaps of rubbish, marking the sites of ancient buildings, and the whole was enclosed by a rampart or wall, the remains of which are marked by mounds of earth. "From the summit of the Birs Nimroud," says Layard, "I gazed over a vast marsh, for Babylon is made 'a possession for the bittern and pools of water.'"

One only needs to read the words of the prophets pronouncing the doom of Babylon, while the accounts of modern travelers are lying open before him, to discern how marked and how strikingly minute has been the fulfillment of prophecy. Isaiah spoke of Babylon in his day as "the golden city," "the glory of kingdoms," "the beauty of the Chaldees' excellency." We know how vivid and accurate is this description, traced while Babylon, if not yet standing, was at least fresh in its ruins, and long before the pride of Nebuchadnezzar had been humbled by the judgments of God. The prophet speaks prophetically of the multitudes gathered to besiege it.

"The noise of a multitude in the mountains, like as of a great people, a tumultuous noise of the

kingdoms, of nations gathered together; the Lord of hosts mustereth the host of battle. They come from a far country, from the end of heaven, even the Lord and the weapons of his indignation to destroy the whole land" (Is. xiii. 4, 5).

We have only to turn to Herodotus to learn how Cyrus gathered from distant nations his motley host, and how many different people from the extremities of the then known world were marshaled in his armies. "They *came* from a far country."

Isaiah's picture of the capture of the city is graphic with terror. "I will stir up the Medes," he says, "against them, which shall not regard silver, and as for gold they shall not delight in it" (Is. xiii, 17). The Medes, as we know, were the nation before whom Babylon fell, and as to their contempt for the splendors of civilization, which they scorned as luxuries, we have only to turn to the pages of Xenophon to be assured of it.

But the prophecy is made more specific. Jeremiah (li. 11), who prophesies shortly before the capture of the city by Cyrus, says: "The Lord hath raised up the spirit of the kings of the Medes; for his device is against Babylon to destroy it; because it is the vengeance of the Lord, the vengeance of his temple." And again (li. 27): "Set ye up a standard in the land, blow the trumpet among the nations; prepare the nations against her; call together against her the kingdoms of Ararat, Minni and Ashchenaz; appoint a captain against her; prepare against her the nations with the kings of the

Medes, the captains thereof, and all the rulers thereof, and all the land of his dominion."

Herodotus tells us that when Cyrus began to gather his forces to besiege Babylon, he had already extended his conquests to the Ægean, so that, beyond question, he had swelled his hosts, in anticipation of his great undertaking, with forces from all the regions named by the prophet, and indeed from all the subjected nations. Hence the prophet says again (l. 3): "Out of the north," that is, from Media and Persia, "there cometh up a nation against her which shall make her land desolate;" and (verse 9), "for lo, I will raise and cause to come up against Babylon an assembly of great nations from the north country, and Chaldea shall be a spoil." "Behold (verse 41) a people shall come from the north, and a great nation, and many kings shall be raised up from the coasts of the earth." "The spoilers (li. 48) shall come unto her from the north."

Nothing could be more definite than this. How exactly it was fulfilled, Xenophon records. The armies of the subjected nations were incorporated with those of the Medes and Persians, and, won by kindness, helped to swell the accumulated force of Cyrus. They approached Babylon from the north, on the line of the great rivers.

The time when this overthrow of Babylon should take place is designated by the prophet (Jeremiah xxvii, 6–8) in another connection. He first declares the extent of Nebuchadnezzar's conquests, and the subjection of the neighboring kingdoms to his power.

Tyre, Edom, and Ammon should not escape. History records distinctly the fulfillment of this portion of the prophecy. But he looks beyond the triumph of Babylon to its humiliation, marking the date of it: "And now have I given all these lands into the hand of Nebuchadnezzar, king of Babylon, . . and all nations shall serve him, and his son, and his son's son, until the very time of his land come; and then many nations and great kings shall serve themselves of him." It would be difficult to present in a more concise form the facts of history. The monarch of Babylon subjected to himself all the surrounding nations, and transmitted his dominion almost unimpaired to his son, and his son's son, till "the time of the land" came, and Babylon fell before Cyrus. In the invader's army were "many nations and great kings," who more or less willingly united in the combined attempt to humiliate the great oppressor, and "serve themselves of him." Yet the words of the prophecy must have been uttered when the conquering career of the king of Babylon had only just begun.

In another passage (Jer. xxv. 11, 12) the language is even more specific. "These nations," it is said, "shall serve the king of Babylon seventy years, and it shall come to pass, when seventy years are accomplished, that I will punish the king of Babylon, and that nation, saith the Lord, for their iniquity." This prophecy, delivered (according to Jer. xxv. 1) in the very year when Nebuchadnezzar began his victorious career, was fulfilled upon the capture of Babylon, and the release of the nations which it had

held subject to its dominion. The fact that the period intervening between the date of the prophecy and the overthrow of the city fell a little short of seventy years, is only in accordance with the usual form of expression employed in Scripture to denote periods of time by round numbers.

The manner in which the army was to be composed was specified (Jer. l. 42.): "They shall hold the bow and lance. They shall ride upon horses." (l. 14, 29): "All ye that bend the bow, shoot at her. Spare no arrows." "Call together the archers against Babylon, all ye that bend the bow." Forty thousand Persian horsemen are said to have been equipped from the spoils of the nations Cyrus had already subdued. The multitude of the besiegers was composed of horsemen, archers and javelin men.

"Put yourselves in array against Babylon round about," said the prophet (Jer. l. 14). The siege was commenced, but what host could encompass a city of sixty miles in circumference? The Babylonians were to scorn the invader. Their pride was excessive, and is described by the prophet in several passages. They trusted in the strength of their walls. But the prophet had said (Jer. l. 31), "I am against thee, O thou most proud, saith the Lord God of hosts, for thy day is come, and the time that I will visit thee." The time did indeed come. "The mighty men of Babylon," said the prophet (Jer. li. 30), "have forborne to fight; they have remained in their holds." "A battle was fought," says Herodo-

tus, "a short distance from the city, in which the Babylonians were defeated by the Persian king, whereupon they withdrew within their defences. Here they shut themselves up (that is, *remained in their holds*), and made light of his siege, having laid up a store of provisions for many years."

The leader of the invading host was designated (Is. xliv. 28, xlv. 1): "That saith of Cyrus, he is my shepherd and shall perform all my pleasure. . . Thus saith the Lord to his anointed, to Cyrus, whose right hand I have holden to subdue nations before him." (Is. xlvi. 11): "Calling a ravenous bird from the east, the man that executeth my counsel from a far country." His success was foretold (xlv. 1, 2): "I will loose the loins of kings, to open before him the two-leaved gates, and the gates of brass shall not be shut. I will go before thee, and make the crooked places straight. I will break in pieces the gates of brass, and cut in sunder the bars of iron. And I will give thee the treasures of darkness, and hidden riches of secret places, that thou mayest know that I, the Lord, which call thee by thy name, am the God of Israel." The fulfillment of this seemed impossible. For full two years the Babylonians, confident and secure, derided the invader from their walls. Yet the promise was verified, and the very method by which it was brought to pass is set forth (Jer. l. 38): "A drought is upon her waters, and they shall be dried up." Cyrus turned off the waters of the Euphrates into the lake above, so that his forces, stationed by anticipation

outside the walls, above the entrance and below the exit of the river, might enter when the stream was low enough for them to ford it. But this alone would have been in vain. "Had the Babylonians," says Herodotus, "been apprised of what Cyrus was about, or had they noticed their danger, they would not have allowed the entrance of the Persians within the city, which was what ruined them utterly, but would have made fast all the street-gates upon the river, and mounting upon the walls, along both sides of the stream, would so have caught the enemy, as it were in a trap."

But the cause of the negligence which allowed the scheme of Cyrus to become successful was foretold (Jer. li. 39, 57): "In their heat I will make their feasts, and I will make them drunken, that they may rejoice, and sleep a perpetual sleep and not wake. . And I will make drunk her princes, and her wise men, her captains and her rulers and her mighty men, and they shall sleep a perpetual sleep and not wake." We are familiar from the record in Daniel with that scene of revelry in which Belshazzar, with "a thousand of his lords," participated on the very night in which Babylon was taken. Herodotus says, "as they were engaged in a festival, they continued dancing and reveling until they learnt the capture but too certainly." The vigilance of the guards was relaxed. The court and the people were lulled in false security. The river gates were left open, and the foe entered.

The manner in which the information of the cap-

ture was to be spread is set forth (Jer. li. 31): "One post shall run to meet another, and one messenger to meet another, to show the king of Babylon that his city is taken at one end." Herodotus says, "The Persians came upon them by surprise. Owing to the vast size of the place, the inhabitants of the central part (as the residents at Babylon declare), long after the outer portions of the city were taken, knew nothing of what had chanced."

"The passages are stopped, the reeds they have burned with fire, and the men of war are affrighted" (Jer. li. 32). This was the message which was to be borne to the king. History shows that this must have been the substance of it. The invaders would naturally stop the passages, cut off communication, and hold the gates leading from the river banks to the city. Already the reeds, or rather outer defences of the marshes (Lowth), had been burned, and the sudden success of the invaders affrighted the soldiers.

And now the slaughter began—first at the palace, where the guards were overwhelmed in their drunkenness by the impetuous onset of the Persians. Then might it indeed be said (Jer. l. 35–37): "A sword is upon the Chaldeans, and upon the inhabitants of Babylon, and upon her princes, and upon her wise men, . . upon her wise men, and they shall be dismayed. A sword is upon their horses, and upon their chariots, and upon all the mingled people that are in the midst of her, and they shall become as women; a sword is upon her treasures, and they shall be robbed."

"I will fill thee with men as with caterpillars, and they shall lift up a shout against thee" (Jer. li. 14); "cause the horses to come up as the rough caterpillars" (li. 27), is the language of the prophet. By these words the ease with which the invading host finally entered is evidently suggested, as well as the great number of which it was composed. When Cyrus reviewed his army after the capture, it is said to have consisted of 120,000 horse, 2,000 chariots, and 600,000 foot. If so, the city must have been "filled as with caterpillars."*

"I will break in pieces the gates of brass, and cut in sunder the bars of iron" (Is. xlv. 2). This must have taken place. "I will give thee the treasures of darkness and hidden riches of secret places" (Is. xlv. 3). The wealth of Babylon, much of which was no doubt secreted, but was discovered by Cyrus, must have been almost incredible. The city was the centre of the world's commerce, and it had been enriched by the tribute as well as the industry of subjugated nations, till it became, as is well known, a very Sodom in luxury and sin. The vast wealth, with the secret treasures at least of the palace, must at once have become the spoil of Cyrus.

The prophecy continues (Jer. l. 15): "Her foundations are fallen, her walls are thrown down."

* Here, as in other connections, the author has not deemed it best to give quotations from the prophecies at length; but it is earnestly recommended that the chapters to which reference is made be read in full. The reader, by so doing, will find his interest in the subject greatly deepened and enlivened.

(Jer. li. 44), "The wall of Babylon shall fall." (58), "The broad walls of Babylon shall be utterly broken, and her high gates shall be burned with fire." This might seem to human view impossible, and yet those walls, those "broad walls," have been utterly leveled, so that modern travelers all agree that they can no longer be traced. The work of desolation was effected, doubtless, in part by the conquerors, in part by mining in them for building purposes, and in part by the ravages of time, storms and floods.

The doom of Babylon was inevitable (Isaiah xlvii. 7–15): "Thou saidst, I shall be a lady for ever, so that thou didst not lay these things to heart. Therefore, hear now this, thou that art given to pleasures, that dwellest carelessly, that sayest in thine heart, I am, and none else beside me; I shall not sit as a widow, neither shall I know the loss of children. But these two things shall come upon thee in a moment in one day, the loss of children and widowhood, . . . for the multitude of thy sorceries and for the great abundance of thy enchantments. For thou hast trusted in thy wickedness. Therefore shall evil come upon thee; thou shalt not know from whence it riseth; and mischief shall fall upon thee; thou shalt not be able to put it off; and desolation shall come upon thee suddenly, which thou shalt not know. Stand now with thy enchantments. Let now the astrologers and star-gazers, the monthly prognosticators, stand up and save thee from these things that shall come upon thee. Behold, they shall be

as stubble; the fire shall burn them; they shall not deliver themselves. None shall save them."

Who can read such language without having the closing scenes of Belshazzar's feast recalled to mind, together with the confusion of the soothsayers and astrologers? If we did not know that the fact was otherwise, we might imagine that Isaiah's words were written after their fulfillment.

The fate of the gods of Babylon was foretold (Isaiah xlvi. 1): "Bel boweth down. Nebo stoopeth. Their idols were upon the beasts. (2), They could not deliver the burden, but themselves are gone into captivity." (Isaiah xxi. 9), "Babylon is fallen, is fallen, and all the graven images of her gods he hath broken unto the ground." (Jer. l. 38), "It is the land of graven images, and they are mad upon their idols." Who does not recall the scenes upon the plains of Dura, and readily apprehend what a tempting spoil the silver and gold of the Babylonian images would be to a conqueror? Such idolatrous remains as the ruins of Nineveh disclosed have not been found at Babylon, and there can be no doubt that they became for the most part the spoil of the conqueror.

"Babylon hath been a golden cup in the Lord's hand, that made all the earth drunken" (Jer. li. 7). Yet she is addressed (13), "O thou that dwellest upon many waters, abundant in treasures, thine end is come, and the measure of thy covetousness" (Isaiah xlvii. 1, 5). "Come down and sit in the dust, O virgin daughter of Babylon. Sit on the

ground; there is no throne, O daughter of the Chaldeans; sit thou silent, get thee into darkness, for thou shalt no more be called the lady of kingdoms." Babylon might continue to exist for subsequent centuries, but she did indeed sit in the dust, and was no longer called the "lady of kingdoms." The nations, as was foretold (Jer. li. 44), did not any more flow to Bel, the Babylonian deity. "Unto Babylon and to all the inhabitants of Chaldea" (Jer. li. 24) was rendered back "all their evil that they had done in Zion," and they might well say that God had (36) taken vengeance for his holy city.

The prophet said (Jer. li. 37): "Babylon shall become heaps." Every modern traveler, like Porter, Rich and Layard, speaks of the immense mounds that cover the site of the ruined city. Her once vast and splendid palaces are now but shapeless heaps. "Cast her up as heaps," he says again (Jer. l. 26), "and destroy her utterly; let nothing of her be left." "The traveler," says Layard, "before reaching 'Babel,' still about four miles distant, follows a beaten track, winding amidst low mounds." "Southward of Babel, for the distance of nearly three miles, there is an almost uninterrupted line of mounds, the ruins of vast edifices, collected together as in the heart of a great city." Yet he remarks, "It was a hopeless task to excavate in a shapeless heap of rubbish of such vast extent (the Mujelibe). . . . The only relic of any interest I was fortunate enough to discover was a fragment of limestone on which were parts of two figures, undoubtedly those of gods."

More wonderful still, it was declared by Isaiah (xiii. 20): "It shall never be inhabited, neither shall it be dwelt in from generation to generation, neither shall the Arabian pitch tent there, neither shall the shepherds make their fold there." "Because of the wrath of the Lord," says Jeremiah (l. 13), "it shall not be inhabited, but it shall be wholly desolate." (40), "As God overthrew Sodom and Gomorrah, so shall no man abide there, neither shall any son of man dwell therein." (li. 26), "Thou shalt be desolate for ever." (43), "A land wherein no man dwelleth, neither doth any son of man pass thereby." (62), "None shall remain in it, neither man nor beast; it shall be desolate for ever." (64), "Babylon shall sink, and shall not rise from the evil that I will bring upon her."

It would be superfluous to cite the varied testimony of modern travelers on this point. Rauwolf, in the sixteenth century, reported, "There was not a house to be seen." "It is impossible," says Major Keppel, "to behold this scene and not be reminded how exactly the predictions of Isaiah and Jeremiah have been fulfilled." It is "a tenantless and desolate metropolis." But might not the shepherd fold his flock or the desert Arab pitch his tent there? Either of them might traverse it by day, but neither of them can be persuaded to spend a night among the ruins. "The superstitious dread of evil spirits, far more than the natural terror of the wild beasts, effectually prevents them." One traveler* was ac-

* Capt. Mignan, referred to by Keith.

companied by six Arabs, completely armed, but he could not induce them to remain towards night, from the apprehension of evil spirits. "All the people of the country assert that it is extremely dangerous to approach this mound (the Mujelibe) after nightfall, on account of the multitude of evil spirits by which it is haunted."

"But wild beasts of the desert shall lie there, and their houses shall be full of doleful creatures, and owls shall dwell there, and satyrs shall dance there, and the wild beasts of the islands shall cry in their desolate houses, and dragons in their pleasant palaces." A portion of this (Is. xiii. 21, 22) must have been fulfilled before the desolation had become so entire as now. But we are told that there are many dens of wild beasts in various parts. The lower excavations are said to be pools of water, while "in most of the cavities are numbers of bats and owls." Here the jackal and other animals find a refuge. Two or three majestic lions were seen upon the heights of "the temple of Belus" by Sir Robert Ker Porter, as he approached it, and the broad prints of their feet were left in the clayey soil. Travelers were told by their guides that the ruins abounded in lions and other wild beasts.

Isaiah (xiv. 23) says: "I will make it a possession for the bittern and pools of water." Layard says, "from the summit of the Birs Nimroud I gazed over a vast marsh, for Babylon is made 'a possession for the bittern and pools of water.'" By the overflow of the Euphrates, and the neglect of

ancient cultivation, the prophecy has been fulfilled (Jer. li. 42): "The sea is come up upon Babylon, she is covered with the multitude of the waves thereof." No doubt the force of the waves has contributed to bring about the result long foretold, which travelers now witness—Babylon "a dwelling-place for dragons, an astonishment and a hissing" (Jer. li. 37), and "her cities a desolation, a dry land and a wilderness"—for, however apparently inconsistent these representations may be, they are alike true. A portion of the site of Babylon is marsh, and a portion is a dry land and a wilderness, and the varied result has been produced alike by the neglect of the ancient arts of irrigation. "It is not difficult," says Layard, "to account for the rapid decay of the country around Babylon. As the inhabitants deserted the city the canals were neglected. When once these great sources of fertility were choked up, the plains became a wilderness, . . vegetation ceased, and the plains, parched by the burning heat of the sun, were ere long once again an arid waste."

It was foretold (Jer. li. 26): "They shall not take of thee a stone for a corner, nor a stone for foundations." The bricks have been taken in large quantities, and the ruins of Babylon have been robbed to build up new cities. But the solid piers at the bottoms of the mounds are too deep for excavation, and the cement of great masses of the bricks is so firm that they can with difficulty be separated or shaped. The language of the prophecy seems

the more remarkable when we are told by Layard, speaking of the *Kasr*, that "this ruin has for ages been the mine from which the builders of cities rising after the fall of Babylon have obtained their materials. To this day there are men who have no other trade than that of gathering bricks from this vast heap and taking them for sale to the neighboring towns and villages, and even to Bagdad. There is scarcely a house in Hillah which is not almost entirely built with them; and as the traveler passes through the narrow streets, he sees in the walls of every hovel a record of the glory and power of Nebuchadnezzar." Yet withal, they do not take of Babylon "a stone for a corner, nor a stone for a foundation."

Every one must confess that however minute the prophecies concerning Babylon, they have been fulfilled in the most extraordinary manner. And this is the more remarkable that it was only in the slow succession of centuries, and long after the prophecies had been penned, that the city was overtaken by its final doom. In the days of Isaiah, Babylon had not attained to its full splendor, and Jeremiah must have prophesied while the city was yet uninvaded, for he makes no mention of the people of Judah as returned from the captivity. How improbable when the former, and how much more improbable when the latter—more than a century later—penned their prophecies, that such a strange fate, so specifically described, would overtake the guilty city! A space, at the least calculation, nearly five times the area of modern London, with its 3,000,000 of inhabitants,

was included within walls which have been not inaptly described as "artificial mountains." The constructions of Nebuchadnezzar were wonderful. They would be incredible but for the evidence which their ruins furnish. He dug the canal, 400 or 500 miles long, still to be traced, from Hit, the Is of Herodotus, on the Euphrates, to the Persian Gulf. His new palace, the *Kasr*, is said to have been completed in fifteen days. The inner wall of the city was reared by him. He built or rebuilt almost all the cities of Upper Babylonia, and it would seem that he was justified, to human view, in saying of his capital also, "Is not this great Babylon that I have built?" Aqueducts, reservoirs, quays, embankments, breakwaters, as well as palaces and temples, formed the monuments of his magnificent reign.

How improbable that a capital like this, abounding with massive structures, so vast that it would require thousands of men for months properly to explore their buried ruins, should become utterly deserted, and that all the minute and varied denunciations uttered against it by the prophets should be literally fulfilled! Who can read the report of the modern traveler exploring its site, and not confess that the fallen grandeur of the great mistress of the nations reads to us an ever-memorable lesson—a lesson not only of the inevitable vengeance of God against guilty nations, but of the truth of his Word and the inspiration of his prophets? What no human sagacity could have foreseen, and no human plans could have effected, has been wrought out by

a wonder-working Providence, and for a thousand years the sentence of the guilty city was read in different parts of the world before the cup of vengeance was full or the sentence itself had been finally executed.





PETRA.

NEARLY four thousand years ago an old, blind Hebrew bestowed his patriarchal blessing upon his two sons. To one of them he gave the promise of the family headship, implying peculiar privileges; to the other he said (Gen. xxvii. 39): "Behold, thy dwelling shall be of the fatness of the earth and of the dew of heaven from above." That patriarch was Isaac, and it was to Esau that the promise of "the fatness of the earth" was made. Was that promise, which evidently concerned the heritage of himself and his posterity, ever fulfilled?

Idumea, or ancient Edom, was the region which that posterity occupied for many centuries. It lies to the south of Palestine and the Dead Sea. Yet the traveler, as he approaches it, seems to see before him a wild tract of country, bristling with rugged hills and craggy mountains. The old name of the region—Mount Seir*—recurs to his memory, while he sees before him a billowy waste of rocky heights, as if a great volcanic sea had been suddenly arrested with its heaving masses, and congealed in

* Rugged.

giant waves of sandstone and porphyry. Is this the land, he may well ask, which the words of the Hebrew patriarch described as "the fatness of the earth?" Is this a heritage to be envied or to be regarded as a portion fit to be coupled with the patriarch's blessing?

But a closer survey of the region will reveal more than a merely repulsive aspect. The valleys that wind about among the hills and mountains are singularly fertile, and even now, after centuries of neglect, the scene that meets the eye when the morning light falls on the dew-drops that cluster thickly on leaf and flower is well-nigh enchanting. Along up the bleak mountain sides, once terraced and covered with fruits and vines, the verdure often extends, while the varied colors of the rocks, rich with strange hues, contrasts with the deep green that here and there hides their deep red or dark purple tints. With civilized industry the land might once more resume its ancient fertility and beauty. It needs only that an end be put to the plundering and marauding habits of the Arabs, and with well-directed enterprise the land of Idumea might again become what it was when travelers, from East and West alike, were constrained to confess that it justified the epithet of the old patriarch, "the fatness of the earth."

Esau was not the original settler of Edom. The earliest inhabitants of the country were the Horites, from whom Mount Hor doubtless derives its name. They were so called, it is said, from Hori, the

grandson of Seir (Gen. xxxvi. 22), because that word was descriptive of their habits as " dwellers in caves," and by them undoubtedly the earliest excavations in the precipitous cliffs of Petra were made.*

The physical geography of Edom has not a little to do with its history. It lay between the Gulf of Elath, reaching out from the Red Sea, and the Mediterranean, and was thus fitted to become a thoroughfare for the commerce between the two seas and the regions adjoining. On its western side it is bounded by low limestone hills, and on its eastern runs an almost unbroken limestone ridge, a thousand feet or more higher than the western elevations, but sloping away eastward into the plateau of the Arabian Desert. Within the space thus bounded rise lofty masses of igneous rock, chiefly porphyry, over which lies red and variegated sandstone, sometimes rich in its varied tints, and the average elevation of the summits is about 2,000 feet above the level of the sea. Edom is thus rendered in many parts wild, rugged and inaccessible, while the deep glens and flat terraces along the mountain sides are covered with rich soil, from which trees, shrubs and flowers spring up after the rains in great abundance. Indeed, travellers have marked the changed aspect of vegetation as they passed from the desert region on the east into the territory of Edom in the vicinity of Petra. The contrast is striking between the bare, parched plains on either side and the tinted rocks and green and flower-sprinkled valleys and terraced

* See Deut. ii. 22.

hillsides of Edom. We can readily conceive that industry and irrigation must have made this region answer to the description of it as promised by Isaac to Esau, whose dwelling was to be "of the fatness of the earth and of the dew of heaven from above."

The ancient capital of Edom was Bozrah, the site of which is doubtless marked by the village of Buseirah, on the northern border. But in the course of centuries, Petra, or Sela, as the Hebrews called it, ranked pre-eminent as the stronghold of the country, while Elath and Eziongeber, captured by David, and used by Solomon to equip his merchant fleets, were its seaports. When Judah fell before Babylon, Edom recovered its lost territory and extended its domain by conquest,* thus filling to the full the measure of its guilt, and inviting the divine denunciations by the lips of the Hebrew prophets. Southern Palestine, including Hebron, fell under its sway. Three centuries before Christ, Edom proper was taken possession of by the Nabatheans, descended from Nabaioth, Ishmael's eldest son and Esau's brother-in-law. Antigonus, the successor of Alexander, sent two expeditions against them, but the people, abandoning their nomadic customs, settled down to industrial and commercial pursuits; and when Roman dominion began to extend over the East, they had their own monarch, subsequently tributary to that empire. At this time roads were constructed through the mountain defiles, connecting

* Then was evidently fulfilled the prophecy (Gen. xxvii. 40), "Thou shalt break his yoke from off thy neck."

Elath, the sea-port, with Petra, and extending on to the north and west. Traces of these still remain, as well as of ruinous military stations, at intervals, and mile-stones of the time of Trajan and Marcus Aurelius.

The Mohammedan invasion gave a death-blow to the commerce and prosperity of Edom. Under the withering curse of the new faith its great cities fell into decay and the country relapsed into desert. The Crusaders penetrated into the country, and gave to the defile by which Petra is approached the name it now bears, *Wady Mûsa*, or Valley of Moses. But they failed to identify the rock-hewn city of Petra. They supposed it to be Kerak, on the borders of Moab, to the north. From their day till a period within the memory of persons now living, Edom remained almost utterly unknown. In 1807, Mr. Seetzen, traveling under the name of Morse, made an excursion into Arabia Petra as far as what he calls the borders of Idumea, but he did not reach the ruins of Petra. In 1812, Burckhardt, overcoming great difficulties, succeeded in reaching the place, but was able to make few explorations. Subsequently the city was visited by Banks and Captains Irby and Mangles, by Laborde and Linant, by our countryman Stephens, by Dr. Robinson, by Miss Martineau, and, among others, by Dean Stanley. The features of the region and the wonders of this ancient city have thus been reported to us, and we can form some idea of its ancient strength and splendor.

The city never could have contained a population like that of Babylon or Nineveh. Perhaps at the utmost it had not a population of over 200,000. But the city itself is of immense antiquity. The Edomites had the command of ports on the Red Sea, and thus controlled the commerce of India and Ethiopia. This, for many centuries, was the source of their wealth and greatness. Petra was the central point between the Asiatic seas and the Mediterranean, where the caravans rested. If we may draw inferences from the book of Job, we may presume that the Edomites were acquainted with many of the arts of civilization. They wrought mines, manufactured brass wire, coined money, possessed mirrors, used scales and the weaver's shuttle, had musical instruments, and had made some advances in natural history and astronomy. The use of the chisel for sculpture as well as skill in excavation is evidenced by the remains which have come down to us from ancient times. Quite a large number of cities were contained within the bounds of their territory, but the most noted of them, their stronghold, and at length their capital, was known as Petra; in Hebrew, Sela; in English, rock. Let us endeavor, by borrowing from the sketches of different travelers, to form some idea of the main entrance to this wonderful city. Descending into the valley that opens into the gorge by which the traveler approaches from the south-east, our path lies along a fine little brook, skirted with oleanders, which in the month of May are in full blossom. Further on, the valley is shut

in, narrowed to a space of about fifty yards, by cliffs of red sandstone, rising at first to a height of forty or fifty feet. Here on the right commences the necropolis. The tombs are excavated from the solid rock and face the ravine, some ornamented with decayed columns, and some cut in the massive Egyptian style. Still further on to the left is a tomb with a front of six Ionic columns, while directly over it is another sepulchre, over the door of which are four slender pyramids, sculptured in the rock.

As the traveler advances the valley contracts and the cliffs which bound it rise to a greater height. On either side is a street of rock-hewn tombs. At length the gorge is reached, the walls of rock approach still nearer together, and a few steps further on a noble arch is thrown across high up from one precipice to another, while niches, doubtless intended for statues, are cut underneath each end. Here the walls are but twelve feet apart, and for a mile and a half further they never expand to more than a space of from thirty to forty feet. It would seem as if they had been torn asunder by some great convulsion, leaving barely room for two horsemen to ride abreast. A swelling stream, at certain seasons of the year, rushes between them, along the whole distance watering a thicket of oleanders, tamarinds and wild figs, while vines of creeping plants hang in festoons on the sides of the cliffs, hundreds of feet above the traveler's head. The eagle is heard screaming above, while the almost overarching rocks nearly shut out the view of the sky, and amid

the sculptured tombs, open on each side, the dimness seems truly sepulchral. The remains of aqueducts, by which the water was anciently distributed, are still to be seen, while on the left are traces of a channel cut in the rock near the level of the ground. A conduit of earthen pipes, four or five inches in diameter, let into the rock and cemented, is carried along high up on the right-hand precipice, but only the ruins of it now remain.

The bottom of the passage, anciently paved with squared stones, is still here and there to be seen, and in it the traveler notes the ruts worn by ancient chariot wheels. Far above are shallow niches, the outlines and first cuttings of pediments, where busts and statues perhaps once stood, or where inscriptions were traced. As the gorge widens, now this way and now that, lateral chasms and clefts are seen, showing apparently that the whole region has been rent by the same convulsion.

One traveler speaks of the "indomitable wildness" of this main avenue, and others become almost enthusiastic in its description. Dr. Robinson says, "The character of this wonderful spot, and the impression which it makes, are utterly indescribable, and I know of nothing which can present even a faint idea of them. I had visited the strange sandstone lanes and streets of Adersbach, and wandered with delight through the romantic dells of the Saxon Switzerland—both of which scenes might be supposed to afford the nearest parallel; yet they exhibit few points of comparison. All here is on a grander



The Khuzneh at Petra.

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scale of savage yet magnificent sublimity. We lingered along this superb approach, proceeding slowly and stopping often, forgetful of everything else, and taking for the moment no note of time."

At length the gorge, about a mile and a half in length, terminates, or rather strikes almost at right angles into another broader one, running from the south to the north-west. But all at once, as the traveler approaches the angle, the front of the Khuzneh, in the western precipice, bursts upon his view. He beholds a temple hewn out of the rock, and set in a niche of rock, its material a rose-colored stone, which is shown off most delicately by the dark shrubs which grow before it. Its height is between sixty and seventy feet, while of its six columns five are still standing. Its position is "wonderfully fine," while its elaborate carvings of garlands, its bas-reliefs (somewhat defaced), and the suddenness with which this admirably preserved structure strikes the eye of the traveler emerging from the dim avenue by which it is approached, deepen the impression. Buckhardt calls the temple "one of the most elegant remains of antiquity existing in Syria." Stanley says that to one coming upon it unexpectedly from the east, he "cannot conceive of anything more striking." Stephens speaks of it as "the pride and beauty of Petra." His companion, on beholding it, involuntarily cried out, clapped his hands, and shouted in extasy. Long afterward the traveler declared that "neither the Coliseum at Rome, nor the ruins of the Acropolis at Athens, nor the pyra-

mids, nor the mighty temples of the Nile," were so often present to his memory. Dr. Robinson speaks of the delicacy of its fine chiseling and the freshness and beauty of its soft coloring. "I had seen," he adds, "various engravings of it, and read all the descriptions; but this was one of the rare instances where the truth of the reality surpassed the ideal anticipation. It is indeed most exquisitely beautiful; and nothing I have seen of architectural effect in Rome or Thebes, or even Athens, comes up to it in the first impression." In spite of its debased style of architecture, its position, its wonderful state of preservation, the framework of cliffs, several hundred feet high, in which it is set, the glow and tint of the stone, and the wild scenery around, are enough to justify the traveler's confession—"I was perfectly fascinated with this splendid work of ancient art in this wild spot."

Turning now to the north-west, by a broader avenue, we approach the central ruins of this rock-hewn city. Innumerable tombs, with small chambers, are cut into the cliffs which rise lofty and perpendicular on either side. In some places three tiers of sepulchres are excavated one over another, while the steep, precipitous approach to them, once accessible doubtless by hewn steps, is no longer practicable. The fronts of some of the tombs are plain. Others are ornamented with columns, friezes and pediments sculptured in relief on the face of the rock.

Following the gorge, now expanded to a valley,

in a northerly direction, the traveler at length, as the area before him opens more boldly, finds on his left the remains of an amphitheatre, 120 feet in diameter, and hewn out of the live rock. Thirty-three rows of seats rise one above another in the side of the cliff, while above the seats a row of small chambers is excavated in the circle of the rock looking down upon the scene below. Some 4,000 persons could have been accommodated, while the eye of the observer that glanced from the rear over the sea of the living would behold also in the eastern cliff the sepulchres of the dead. From that point also the best view is now to be obtained of this wonderful valley of ruins. The city itself indeed lay more to the left, along the banks of the stream which accompanies the traveler through the gorge, and then turns to the west to make its escape by some narrow defile, not unlike, doubtless, the one by which it entered. On either side of it is a strip of level land, to the north and south of which the ground rises into low irregular mounds, and passes gradually to heights more or less precipitous. This central space—bounded on the east and west by walls of rock, and now overspread by the fragments and indistinguishable rubbish of former structures—is the site of the main portion of the ancient city. Among the remains are those which indicate the commingling of Roman or Greek architecture with the old Idumean. The only edifice still standing is that called Pharaoh's palace, and even this, Roman in style and adorned with stucco garlands,

is cracked and mouldering. Near it, however, is a triumphal arch. With these exceptions, the eye rests only upon a scene of crumbling stones and lines of excavated cliffs, many of them undoubtedly once the homes of the living, others the sepulchres of the dead. Far away to the north-east, beyond the proper bounds of the city, and 1500 feet high among the mountain cliffs, the traveler reaches, in part by a staircase and in part by climbing over many a slope of slippery rock, a large building known as El Deir, or the convent, a yellow temple, completely niched in red rocks. Near by are the remains of a circus, and in the distance are mountain peaks, heaped confusedly together, and presenting a scene of chaos and desert desolation which no words can describe.

Of Petra itself, Dr. Robinson says: "In looking at the wonders of this ancient city, one is at a loss whether most to admire the wildness of the position and natural scenery, or the taste and skill with which it was fashioned into a secure retreat and adorned with splendid structures, chiefly for the dead. The most striking feature of the place consists, not in the fact that there are occasional excavations and sculptures, like those above described, but in the innumerable multitude of such excavations along the whole extent of perpendicular rocks adjacent to the main area, and in all the lateral valleys and chasms, the entrances of very many of which are variously, richly and often fantastically decorated, with every imaginable order and style of architecture."

Amid this variety the Egyptian and the Roman-Greek styles predominate, or rather a mixture of these two constitutes the prevailing style. This singular combination or amalgamation is accounted for by the prevalence of Roman influence and then of Roman dominion about the time of the Christian era.

The question may be asked whether the multitude of excavations in the sides of the cliffs are all to be accounted tombs? Dr. Robinson thinks the greater portion were, but not all. Miss Martineau regards this conclusion as extraordinary, inasmuch as none of these excavations have been sealed up, and no remains of the dead are found within them, while their number is so great that they must have exceeded all that the area of the city itself ever contained. To this may be added the consideration that many of the Arab tribes of the desert live in caves, and all their modes of living appear to be aboriginal. She adds: "Every deserted place is mournful enough, but nowhere else is their desolation like that of Petra, where these rock doorways stand wide—still fit for the habitation of a multitude, but all empty and silent, except for the multiplied echo of the cry of the eagle or the bleat of the kid. No, these excavations never were all tombs. In the mornings the sons of Esau came out in the first sunshine to worship at their doors, before going forth, proud as their native eagles, to the chase; and at night the yellow fires lighted up from within, tier above tier, the face of the precipice."

But whether the excavations were for the most

part tombs or dwellings, Petra was once a proud city, and its crumbling remains help us to imagine what it must have been when at the height of its power and splendor. It was probably for a time the metropolis of Edom, and the rich commerce that poured from the East to the Mediterranean, or from the Mediterranean to the East, flowed along that narrow gorge, where a few men might have barred the entrance of an invading host, and where the king of Edom could haughtily forbid the children of Israel to pass through his land. Once that gorge was populous with thronging caravans and the tides of traffic. The streets of the city were a great mart, and the city itself was a natural fortress. Wealth and taste and pleasure were there. The sculptured rocks showed culture of art and a relish for its beautiful forms. The amphitheatre was crowded with thousands of curious spectators. Once these lofty rocks echoed with the cries of the camel-drivers, the rattle of the chariots, the laugh of idlers, the play of children and the din of busy industry. But they are silent now; the Western traveler sits down on some broken column to sketch the crumbling ruins; wandering Arabs encamp there for the night, or may be seen in their wild costume winding amid the thickets or clambering over the fragments of fallen grandeur. For more than a thousand years Petra has been a petrified and yet crumbling desolation. The scream of the eagle wakes its lonely echoes among the rocks, and the stranger who lingers for a night is in constant dread of scorpions.

One only needs to sit down amid the perfect desolation and awful solitude, and open there the volume of prophecy, to see how remarkably the predictions of Scripture concerning it have been fulfilled.

The language of Isaiah (xxxiv. 5, 6) is: "My sword shall be bathed in heaven; behold, it shall come down upon Idumea and upon the people of my curse to judgment. The sword of the Lord is filled with blood." We have no record of the precise manner in which Petra was finally destroyed, but it would seem as if the sword that was to reach it was literally to descend from heaven, and there must have been a fierce slaughter before this great natural fortress could have been taken. The day of this judgment might well be described as "the day of the Lord's vengeance and the year of recompenses for the controversy of Zion."

He says again (xxxiv. 11): "He shall stretch out upon it the line of confusion and the stones of emptiness." A mere description of the ruins might suggest these very words, applicable not only to Petra, but to Idumea, with all its cities. "The cormorant and the bittern shall possess it; the owl and raven shall dwell in it." One traveler after another has found the only possessors of it, with the occasional exception of prowling Arabs, to be the "eagles," or birds of prey. "Thorns shall come up in her palaces, nettles and brambles in the fortresses thereof." One of the most striking features of the descriptions given of the precipitous cliffs with their rocky chambers is, that they are

covered over with verdure. Vines, and brambles, and shrubs, answering, doubtless, to the original Hebrew words, clamber and twine about the rocks and the crumbling sculptures.

Jeremiah (xlix. 7) asks, "Concerning Edom, thus saith the Lord of hosts, Is wisdom no more in Teman? Is counsel perished from the prudent? Is their wisdom vanished?" The answer is, that of all the records of Idumean learning we have nothing remaining. The inscriptions, with perhaps a single exception of comparatively modern date, are irrevocably lost. Besides, the ruin into which the land has fallen shows that all its boasted wisdom could not prevent it, and the desolation itself proclaims that wisdom has for ever fled. Its present possessors are unlettered Arabs.

Again (v. 9): "If grape-gatherers come to thee, would they not leave some gleaning grapes? If thieves by night, they will destroy till they have enough." How graphic is this intimation of the completeness of the spoliation! In all the palaces, temples and tombs of the city no work of curious art is left to tempt the spoiler. The remains and memorials of the dead have all alike disappeared.

Again (v. 10): "But I have made Esau bare, I have uncovered his secret places, and he shall not be able to hide himself; his seed is spoiled and his brethren and his neighbors, and he is not." The most secret apartments of Petra have been thrown open. There is no door left to close upon any hidden treasure. The desolation itself is bare and

naked, and all can see that the spoliation is complete, and that "he is not."

Still again (v. 16) we read: "Thy terribleness hath deceived thee, and the pride of thine heart, O thou that dwellest in the clefts of the rock, that holdest the height of the hill; though thou shouldst make thy nest as high as the eagle, I will bring thee down from thence, saith the Lord." Who does not seem, in reading these words, to see the lofty and inaccessible excavations in the heart of the cliffs, where the proud dweller might look down, like an eagle, with scorn on his assailant? What a picture of his residence, dwelling in "the clefts of the rock," and yet he has been brought down! No one now mounts to the place where he once dwelt, and the walls of his habitation are slowly crumbling away and falling down to the bottom of the cliffs.

The language of Ezekiel (xxv. 13) is: "Thus saith the Lord God, I will also stretch out my hand upon Edom, and will cut off man and beast from it: and I will make it desolate from Teman." Volney says: "From the reports of the Arabs of Bakir and the inhabitants of Gaza, who frequently go to Maan (Teman) and Karak, on the road of the pilgrims, there are, to the south-east of the Lake of Asphaltites (the Dead Sea), within three days' journey, upwards of thirty ruined towns, absolutely deserted. Several of them have large edifices, with columns which may have belonged to ancient temples, or at least to Greek churches. The Arabs sometimes make use of them to fold their cattle in, but in gene-

ral avoid them, on account of the enormous scorpions with which they swarm." Thus man and beast have been cut off from it, and it has been made desolate from Teman.

But this desolation is emphatic. "I will make thee," is the language of Ezekiel (xxxv. 3, 4), "*most desolate.* I will lay thy cities waste and thou shalt be desolate." (9), "I will make thee perpetual desolations, and thy cities shall not return." (14), "When the whole earth rejoiceth, I will make thee desolate." (15), "Thou shalt be desolate, O Mount Seir, and all Idumea, even all of it." So Isaiah (xxxv. 10) says, "From generation to generation it shall be waste." And Jeremiah (xlix. 13) says, "All the cities thereof shall be perpetual wastes." And again (17), "Edom shall be a desolation; every one that goeth by it shall be astonished and shall hiss at all the plagues thereof." So, also, Joel (iii. 19) says, "Edom shall be a desolate wilderness." How exactly all this has been fulfilled is testified by every traveler. Laborde, speaking of the extensive view obtained from one point, remarks that it exhibited a vast, frightful desert—a chaotic sea, the waves of which were petrified." "Nowhere else is there a desolation like that of Petra," writes Miss Martineau. "Around us were the desolations of ages," remarks Dr. Robinson. "Well might there be the stillness of death, for it was the grave itself, a city of the dead, by which we were surrounded." "If I had never stood on the top of Mount Sinai," says Stephens, "I should say that nothing could exceed the desolation of the

view from the summit of Mount Hor, its most striking objects being the dreary and rugged mountains of Seir, bare and naked of trees and verdure. . . . Before me was a land of barrenness and ruin."

On another point the language of Isaiah (xxxiv. 10) is, "None shall pass through for ever and ever." Ezekiel (xxxv. 7) says, "Thus will I . . . cut off from it him that passeth out and him that returneth." And Jeremiah (xlix. 18) says, "As in the overthrow of Sodom and Gomorrah and the neighbor cities thereof, saith the Lord, no man shall abide there, neither shall a son of man dwell in it." "Perfect as has been the fulfillment of the prophecy in regard to this desolate city," writes Stephens, "in no one particular has its truth been more awfully verified than in the complete destruction of its inhabitants—in the extermination of the race of the Edomites." Moreover, till within a recent period, not only its ancient commerce, but traveling explorers shunned it, or rather the latter dared not approach it. Instead of being a thoroughfare, as it was of old, it was really inaccessible to civilized curiosity Almost every traveler has tales to tell of his difficulties in passing through it, and the number of those who have visited Petra is so small that it might well be said that even to this day no man passes through it. That grand highway of commerce, by which the wealth of more eastern countries once poured into Petra, is now a mere defile, rarely visited even by an Arab shepherd, and much more rarely by a commercial or a curious traveler.

Volney remarked, more than a half century ago, that the region had never been visited by any traveler. Burckhardt remarked, a few years later, that he was unprotected in "the midst of a desert where no traveler had ever before been seen," and his route to Petra was pronounced by him the most dangerous he had ever traveled. Joliffe, who visited the north of the Dead Sea, declared that research in the region south of it was impracticable. Other travelers found that guides could not be bribed to conduct them through the region. Captains Irby and Mangles were frustrated in every effort to obtain the protection or sanction of the Turkish authorities for their expedition. The sheik of Wady-Mousa, who claimed to control the region about Petra, swore, in the very spirit of Edom refusing the children of Israel a passage, that they should not go forward; that they should neither drink their water nor pass through their territory. Dr. Robinson had to abandon his wish to visit Mount Hor, and Stephens accomplished his visit at great personal risk.

Such is the marked fulfillment of Scripture prophecies in regard to Idumea. It is scarcely surprising that the passing traveler should have been deeply impressed with it. "I would," says Stephens, "that the skeptic could stand as I did among the ruins of this city among the rocks, and then open the sacred Book and read the words of the inspired penman, written when this desolate place was one of the greatest cities in the world. I see the scoff arrested, his cheek pale, his lip quivering, and his

heart quaking with fear, as the ruined city cries out to him in a voice loud and powerful as that of one risen from the dead; though he would not believe Moses and the prophets, he believes the handwriting of God himself in the desolation and eternal ruin around him."

But there is one very marked feature of the several prophecies. They threaten vengeance for ancient yet never-to-be-forgotten crimes. Edom had been cruel to the chosen people, had proudly scorned them and denied them a passage through the land. She had aggravated the offence by her after conduct, and in all the charges against her these things are made prominent, and they are directly associated with the justice of her doom. What a singular and striking lesson of Providence is thus spread before us, teaching us that generation after generation and century after century may pass away before the cup of a nation's iniquity is full! And after the sentence has been pronounced and is irreversible, ages may intervene before its accomplishment. But the delay is not, and cannot be, final. The slow moving but sure judgments, long ago pronounced, shall overtake the guilty, and thenceforth, age after age, the victim, like a pillar of warning, shall only exist to testify to the righteousness and the justice of Him that ruleth in the armies of heaven, and doeth His will among the inhabitants of the earth.



THE LAND OF BASHAN.

THE march of the Israelites from Egypt to Canaan is one of the most surprising events of ancient history. A whole people—with their families, flocks and herds—are transformed from a band of oppressed bondmen into a conquering nation, and drive out before them the inhabitants of strong and fortified cities; settling down themselves in the possession of rich pasture-lands, towns and villages, wells they had not dug, and vineyards they had not planted, and retaining this possession, almost unresisted, for centuries.

It is a strange narrative, and skepticism has tried to make many of its features appear absolutely incredible. But even the skeptic has found nothing more difficult of acceptance in it than the existence, on the route of the Israelites, of a people whose very name—Rephaim, or Giants—indicates their enormous stature and strength.* In the south of Palestine were the Anakims, of lofty stature, whose warlike appearance struck the Israelites with terror; but on the east of the Jordan was the remnant of a

* See in this connection, Deut. ii. 20.

kindred people, inhabitants of what is now known as the Hoûran, whose gigantic forms and superhuman strength were attested by fortified cities which seemed to defy assault and render their conquest by a nation of shepherds an utter impossibility.

Why should a narrative, already miraculous enough, be loaded down with stories like these? Who, in reading it, might not be disposed to question whether he had not passed from fact to fancy, from history to romance? How ready might he be to say, "Here, at last, we have reached the climax of fable. The story of these giants and of their walled towns, and their conquest by a roving nation of shepherds, is indeed too strange for any sensible man to believe."

Yet the Bible account gives us the story with all its improbabilities. On the very track of the Israelites, as they approached Palestine from the southeast, lay the land of Bashan, stretching from the region of Mt. Hermon far away to the north, down almost to the line of the Dead Sea on the south, thus interposing—in connection with the Moabites and Ammonites—another barrier, more difficult than the Jordan, to the advance of the chosen people. Here was a mighty kingdom, at the head of which was Og, king of Bashan, himself a representative of the primeval giants, a man of towering stature, the Goliath of his age. From the natural fastnesses of Argob, which, with its many and strong cities, formed a principal part of his domain, he came forth to meet and crush the puny invaders, whom he might

well affect to despise. Yet in vain is his gigantic stature. In vain is his resistance. Of his cities we read (Deut. iii.) that threescore were captured by the Israelites, and that all these were "fenced with high walls, gates and bars." Beside these, there were "unwalled towns a great many," while the captured region yielded "cattle and the spoil of cities as a prey."

Have we anything to confirm the truth of this surprising account, which to some may seem enough to decidc the fabulous character of all the incidents connected with it? History has but little to offer, and, until within a few years, scarce a traveler had ventured to explore the scene of the narrative.

A portion of Bashan was assigned to the half tribe of Manasseh, but, with little more than this passing notice of its fate, it disappears from the chart of history for long centuries. It is indeed, by all accounts, one of the finest pasture lands and one of the best grain countries in the world, and we are not surprised to learn that it supplied large provision for Solomon at the height of his power and glory. It was laid waste by Hazael in the time of Jehu. The "oaks of Bashan" and the wild pastures of its cattle are occasionally referred to; the "strong bulls of Bashan" acquired a proverbial fame, and the beauty of its high downs and wide-sweeping plains caught the eye and figured in the descriptions of the Hebrew poets. But history, or any record worthy of mention, it has none. Its very name vanishes in obscurity. Gilead takes the place of Bashan, and

Lejah that of Argob, while unregistered centuries settle down in darkness over all its past renown.

With the early spread of Christianity, after its conquest by Roman power, the country once more emerges into notice. Undoubtedly here was the "Arabia" where Paul went to preach after his conversion, for here was a land which the tradition of ages had declared safe for the outlaw and the persecuted refugee. Before the fifth century its inhabitants had become Christians. Old Roman temples were converted into Christian churches, and new edifices, stately and elegant, were reared for worship. Then came the overwhelming tide of Mohammedan conquest. Churches were transformed into mosques in some cases, and in others were left—as in deeper ruin they are still to be seen—standing desolate in deserted cities. The traveler of to-day, gazing upon the remains of these once noble and even magnificent structures, with their marble colonnades and stately porticoes attesting the taste and wealth of the builders, passes from the silent street into the silent temple, and seems to await the arrival of the worshipers. But the worshipers come not. The Crescent has long displaced the Cross, while the present possessors—a sparse and motley population of Druses, Christians and Turks—are subject to continual alarms from the desert tribes. Few travelers visit or dare to visit the region. Burckhardt, more than half a century since, undertook to explore it, but fell into the hands of robbers, and, plundered even of his clothing, barely escaped with his life. Bashan

has long been almost isolated from the rest of the world. The pilgrim caravan indeed, from Damascus to Mecca, forces its way through, but even its route has been repeatedly changed, and it never ventures forward without force enough to overawe attack.

Up to this point, therefore, we are left in doubt whether this dangerous and almost unknown region retains any considerable memorials of its early inhabitants. There is no answer to our questions as we ask—" Is the strength and relative splendor and civilization of the land, as set forth in the pages of the Bible, mere invention, or at least semi-fabulous exaggerations? Was there a land of Rephaim, or Giants? Was the huge iron bedstead of Og, king of Bashan, 'who only remained of the remnant of giants,' a fiction or a fact? Were the 'threescore walled cities, fenced with high walls, gates and bars,' the imaginary creations of Jewish fear or the crude exaggerations of a fabulous age? Are the statements concerning this wonderful land, which just flits before us on the page of history and then vanishes to appear no more for centuries, the fanciful legend of an unhistoric narrator, who encumbers his record with incredible wonders, or were they the careful and trustworthy evidence of a contemporary and eye-witness?" We ask each of the shadowy centuries, but they give back no response. So far as reliable history is concerned, there is a deep and almost unbroken silence to all our questionings. A single Roman writer, Ammianus Marcellinus, writes:

"Fortresses and strong castles have been erected by the ancient inhabitants among the retired mountains and forests. Here, in the midst of numerous towns, are some great cities, such as Bostra and Gerasa, encompassed by massive walls." But who were these inhabitants, "ancient" while Rome yet ruled the world? What sort of fortresses and castles were these built in retired mountains and forests? How *numerous* were these towns and how *massive* were these walls that challenged the notice of the old Roman historian? Were they such as to indicate a race of giants? Were they such as to imply a civilization that would bear comparison with contemporary Egyptian or Assyrian art?

It has been left for recent travelers to answer these questions. Why is this? Why has not this strange region been explored before, and its wonders revealed to the world? One answer is, that the land itself, while in one part a most fertile plain, is in another a natural fortress, and that the rocky recesses of Argob and the mountain fastnesses of Hermon furnished a welcome and secure refuge for the hunted fugitive. Here he was safe, and here he had the ready sympathy of those who were prepared at once, in his and in their own behalf, to repel invasion. Here Absalom, whose mother was a descendant of one of the native chiefs of the country, found a safe asylum till his father's wrath was appeased. Bashan still is, as from time immemorial it has been, a refuge for all offenders. No matter what their crimes, the hand cf justice could not

reach them here. The avenger of blood declined to pursue them to this region, which for nearly three thousand years has retained its character unchanged. The tide of war has indeed rolled over it. The armies of Nineveh and Babylon crossed it on their desolating march. But they left it as they found it. The wild inhabitant reclaimed his own, only to dispute its possession with the wandering Arab; and the Christian traveler, even with his Druse escort, has had to flee for his life from the assaults of Mohammedan bigotry. Is it strange, then, that the enthusiasm of the curious explorer should be damped when he has difficulties like these to encounter?

Even now we know but in part the mysteries of this hidden land. Yet we know enough to be satisfied that long centuries before Assyrian power culminated, and at least a thousand years before Nebuchadnezzar perfected his palaces at Babylon, there were here monuments of "naked human strength" in such marked profusion, and on so broad a field, that to ascribe their origin to beings less than "giants" would be only to make their existence more strange and inexplicable than ever.

A recent traveler, Rev. J. L. Porter,* for several years a missionary to Damascus, has given us graphic sketches of a portion of this country, which he visited in person. Much of his narrative is of course

* From his work, "The Giant Cities of Bashan," nearly all the facts relating to this region have been derived. The other authorities on the subject are Burckhardt, Buckingham, Lindsay, Graham and some few others, most of whom have reported what they have heard rather than seen.

devoted to the people of the region with whom he came in contact—the Druses, that furnished him an escort and extended to him a truly Oriental hospitality; the few Christians, who retained of their religion little more than the name; the bigoted Moslems, from whose fierce assaults at Edrei he was forced to flee for his life; and the Arab banditti, the modern Ishmaels of the desert, whose plundering propensities were held in check only by the show of superior strength or courage. He notes the primitive manners of the people—their arms, except a few muskets, similar to those in use in the days of the patriarchs; their implements of husbandry, as rude and simple as when Isaac cultivated the valley of Gerar; their hospitality, as profuse and genuine as that which Abraham exercised in his tents at Mamre. "I could scarcely get over the feeling," he says, "as I rode across the plains of Bashan and climbed the wooded hills through the oak forests, and saw the primitive ploughs and yokes of oxen and goads, and heard the old Bible salutation given by every passer-by, and received the urgent invitations to rest and eat at every village and hamlet, and witnessed the killing of the kid and lamb, and the almost incredible despatch with which it is cooked and served to the guests,—I could scarcely get over the feeling, I say, that I had been somehow spirited away back thousands of years, and set down in the land of Nod, or by the patriarch's tents at Beersheba. Common life in Bashan I found to be a constant enacting of early Bible stories."

But in one respect the land of Bashan is unlike almost all others, even of Bible lands. Not only the ancient manners, but the ancient buildings, have been preserved. Changes that have swept like tides over the world—changes wrought by migration, or conquest, or commerce, or the desolating ravages of war—have failed to obliterate dwellings that had been standing for centuries when Abraham went forth, at the command of God, an exile from his father's house. Though crowded with large towns and villages, which have been long deserted—towns and villages built by the "ancient inhabitants" long before the conquest of the Israelites, and which attest by the massive structures they contain the almost incredible strength of their builders—these cities and villages are not ruined. Desolation has been at work everywhere else, but it has paused at the entrance of these stone portals, of which the world, for long centuries, has had no knowledge, but which are revealed to us to-day, as if to confirm, at the fitting moment, the truthfulness of one of the most surprising narratives of the Old Testament.

Let us accompany this adventurous and observant traveler as he ventures forth to explore the secrets of this more than romantic land. Leaving Damascus and its environs, embowered in the sombre foliage, above which the tall white minarets shoot upward toward the sky, he enters upon a plain "smooth as a lake," covered with the delicate green of the young grain. Away on the south rises a ridge of black, bare hills, along which flows the



Stone Door of the Stone Houses of the Rephaim; Bashan.

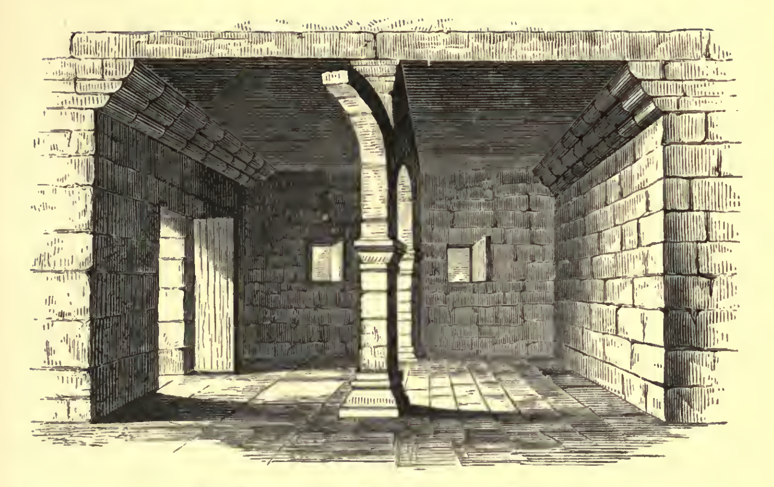
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famed "Pharpar" of Damascus. Beyond this lies the domain of the Bedouin, "whose law is the sword and whose right is might." A dreary scene is now presented to view. Not a green shrub, not a living creature, not a single sign of human habitation is visible. On and on, over loose black stones and boulders of basalt, the traveler presses, till at length, from the brow of a height, a broad meadow, level as a floor, covered with a deep rich black soil, greets his view. Here is the Plain of Bashan, and some distance further on, about twenty miles south-east from Damascus, rises a huge wall of basalt, and on its rocky heights stands the deserted city of Berak. Through its paved streets the traveler makes his way to a stone dwelling, on the floor of which a thick nitrous crust has gathered during the neglect of uncounted ages. Yet the walls are perfect. They are nearly five feet thick, built of large blocks of hewn stones, without lime or cement of any kind. The roof is formed of large slabs of the same black basalt, lying as regularly and joined as closely as if the workmen had only just completed it. They measure twelve feet in length, eighteen inches in breadth and six inches in thickness. The outer door is a huge slab of stone, hung on pivots formed of its projecting parts, and yet, although so massive, it is opened and shut with ease. There is access by stone doors to successive chambers, one of the last a spacious hall, twenty-five feet long by twenty high, roofed with stone slabs supported by a semi-circular arch. A gate of stone, large enough for a camel

to pass through, opens on the street. Yet this is but one of many similar buildings, built on a rocky height and encompassed by rocks which make Berak a natural fortress.

With the dawn of day, the traveler resumes his journey. The rugged features and rocky border of the Lejah, along the route, are thickly studded with old towns and villages. At one time not less than thirty of the three-score cities of ancient Argob are in full view, their massive towers rising here and there like the "keeps" of old Norman castles. Away on the western horizon looms the lofty summit of Hermon, "a spotless pyramid of snow." A thousand square miles of Og's ancient kingdom are spread out to the view of the traveler as he gazes from rocky height or ancient tower. At Hit the ruins are a mile and a half in circumference. Most of the old streets can still be traced, though sometimes choked by the rubbish of Greek or Roman temples that have crumbled, while the dwellings of the more ancient inhabitants are scarcely affected by the wear of centuries. For a mile to the south the traveler sees now and then the openings of a subterranean aqueduct, by which the city was once supplied with water. At Bathanyeh he rides along the silent street, looks in through half-open doors to the interior of desolate houses, with the rank grass and weeds in their courts, while the brambles grow in festoons over the doorways, and branches of trees shoot through the gaping rents in the old walls. The ring of the horses' feet on the pavement wakes



Interior, with Stone Walls and Roof of the Houses of Bashan.

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strange echoes. Owls flap their wings around the gray towers; daws shriek as they fly away from the housetops; foxes and jackals rush in and out among the shattered dwellings. For a thousand years, doubtless, man has been a stranger here. There is no owner for those massive stone dwellings, that might well be called palaces. There is no noble claimant for yonder square stone tower, forty feet in height. At Shuka, four miles distant, twenty families are all that are left of a population that once must have reached twenty thousand. Here are remarkable tombs, dwellings for the dead, not altogether unlike those for the living—towers, twenty feet square, and from thirty to forty feet high, rising story above story.

Turning eastward to the Kunawât, the scenery becomes grander and richer. The mountains of Bashan are seen near by, rearing their lofty peaks, wooded to their summits. From the top of each rising ground the eye ranges over jungle and grove to gray ruins, which rear themselves proudly above the dense foliage. At length the city of Kunawât appears, its walls in many places almost perfect; temples, palaces, churches, theatres and massive buildings, whose original use is unknown, being "grouped together in picturesque confusion, while beyond the wall, in the glen, on the summits and sides of wooded peaks, away in the midst of oak forests, are clusters of columns and massive towers and lofty tombs." The remains of Phenician and Roman idolatries are still to be seen within the walls, while

cisterns, aqueducts, tombs, pillars, prostrate or still erect, testify to a glory which, by the side of the old Rephaim, is but a thing of yesterday.

No city of Bashan has more extensive ruins than Suweideh, yet its ancient name even is unknown. The terraced hillsides and fertile plains around it once fed a vast population. But they are deserted now. At length, near 100 miles south-east of Damascus, the massive towers and battlements of Bozrah,* the ancient stronghold of Bashan, the capital of the Roman province, present themselves to the traveler's view. Here the centuries seem grouped together. The Rephaim and the modern Turks clasp hands over a chasm of four thousand years. The rocky dwellings of the old giant architects, "Jewish masonry and names, Greek inscriptions and temples, Roman roads, Christian churches, Saracenic mosques, Turkish desolations," all are here. The ruins are nearly five miles in circuit. The walls are lofty and massive. Some of the buildings would grace the proudest capital of modern Europe. Yet, where a population of at least 100,000 once dwelt, only twenty families are left, save as the plundering Arabs lurk amid the ruins and watch their chance to rob and slay.

From this once magnificent centre of a rich kingdom great highways radiated in lines "straight as an arrow" to what were once flourishing cities—Ghuzam on the west, Suweideh and Damascus on the north, Salcah on the east—while still others con-

* This is to be distinguished from the Bozrah of Idumea.

ducted the traveler forth to Kerioth, to the mountains of Bashan, or to the towns and villages which still appear in every direction thickly dotting the vast plain. Away in the distance is seen the Beth-Gamul of Scripture, as large as Bozrah, surrounded by high walls, and containing many enormous structures, built of large blocks of basalt, yet houses, walls, streets and gates in as perfect preservation as if the centuries for which it has been deserted were only years. Some twelve miles east of Bozrah, on the extreme border of Bashan, is the frontier city, Salċah, five hundred of its houses still standing, so well preserved that, without laying a stone or expending an hour in repairs, they might be occupied as homes by hundreds of families. On the summit of a steep, conical hill, three hundred feet high, rises the castle, from the top of which the view is magnificent. Thirty deserted towns may be seen scattered over the broad plain, while the landscape is checkered with fenced fields, groves of fig-trees and terraced vineyards clothing the hillsides and the distant mountain slopes. The traveler, passing the ruins of an ancient gate, enters the deserted city. Street after street may be traversed, the horse's tread waking mournful echoes, and startling the wild foxes from their dens in the palaces of Salcah, while long, straggling brambles in the doorways and windows of the empty houses complete the picture of neglected desolation.

A few miles distant is Ayun, a deserted city as large as Salcah, the circumference of whose ruins is

three miles. Kureiyeh (Kerioth) was once by no means inferior, while in the same region are Kuweiris, Ain, Muneiderah and many other cities once strong and flourishing, but now as silent and desolate as tombs. The old dwellings, far out-dating the vanishing remains of Roman art, appear to be just such dwellings as a race of giants would build. "The walls, the roofs, but especially the ponderous gates, doors and bars, are in every way characteristic of a period when architecture was in its infancy, when giants were masons, and when strength and security were the grand requisites. A door at Kerioth measured nine feet high, four and a half wide, and ten inches thick—one solid slab of stone." It is not strange that Ritter should say of these dwellings, reared by the old Rephaim, that they "remain as eternal witnesses of the conquest of Bashan by Jehovah." "When we find," writes Mr. Graham, "one after another, great stone cities, walled and unwalled, with stone gates, and so *crowded* together that it becomes almost a matter of wonder how all the people could have lived in so small a place; when we see houses built of such large and massive stones that no force which can be brought against them in that country could ever batter them down; when we find rooms in these houses so large and lofty that many of them would be considered fine rooms in a palace in Europe; and lastly, when we find some of these towns bearing the very names which cities in that very country bore before the Israelites came out of Egypt,—I think we cannot help

feeling the strongest conviction that we have before us the cities of the Rephaim, of which we read in the book of Deuteronomy."

At Hebran the traveler finds the stone doors even more massive than those of Kerioth, while the walls of the houses are in some instances more than seven feet thick. Two miles south is the deserted town of Afineh; three miles eastward, Sehweh, with its great towers shooting up from the midst of a dense oak forest; and equidistant to the north is Kufr, whose walls still stand, with their stone gates ten feet high, but without a solitary inhabitant.

But much still remains to be explored. A half century ago, Buckhardt stated that on the eastern declivity of Djebel Houran there were upwards of 200 ruined villages, all built of basaltic rock, at a quarter or half an hour's distance from each other. Lord Lindsay walked through whole streets of stone houses at Ezra (the ancient Zarava), and found them in good repair, yet almost untenanted. Most of the chief towns of the Houran exhibit the remains of the architectural magnificence which Rome lavished on her remotest colonies. There is scarcely a village without its tank and its bridge, while the Roman mansion still speaks of the princely wealth of its owner. Yet these monuments of Roman art are often, to the dwellings of the more ancient inhabitants, only like inscriptions in plaster to the solid rock which that plaster is employed to face. They testify, however, to the significant fact that long centuries after the Rephaim had disappeared the

country was able to support a population that might otherwise have seemed incredible. In the list of Arabic names of places appended to Dr. Robinson's Researches there are the names of one hundred and fifty-six in ruins or deserted in the Houran and Lejah; eighty-one in Batania, or Bashan; eighty-six in Ajlun, one hundred and twenty-three in the Belka—in all, four hundred and forty-six on the east of the Jordan. The whole region must once, judging from this, as well as from the ruins of tenantless villages and towns scattered in every direction, have been one of the most thickly-populated and fertile regions on the face of the globe. The scene which it presented in the days of the Roman empire must have been scarcely less than enchanting. The luxuriant herbage, the waving harvests, the wooded heights and their noble oaks, the cities, with their palaces, theatres and temples, the villages sprinkled all over the broad plain—these must have composed a landscape full of beauty to the eye, and suggestive of the rare capabilities of the region of which the old Rephaim were dispossessed. Who can help feeling that the report of it given by Moses was from the lips of a contemporary and eye-witness?—"A good land, a land of wheat and barley, and vines and fig-trees and pomegranates; a land of oil, olive and honey; a land wherein thou shalt eat bread without scarceness, thou shalt not lack anything in it." And who does not recognize the vividness of the historian in his prophetic words?—"I will make your cities waste, and bring your cities unto desola-

tion. I will bring the land into desolation, and your enemies which dwell therein shall be astonished at it. . . The stranger that shall come from a far land shall say, Wherefore hath the Lord done thus unto this land? What meaneth the heat of this great anger?"

Not less vivid is the picture of Jeremiah (iv. 25, 26): "I beheld, and there was no man; . . the fruitful place was a wilderness, and all the cities thereof were broken down at the presence of the Lord and by his fierce anger." Ezekiel (vii. 2, 21–23) adds yet other and still more striking features of the picture: "I will give it into the hands of strangers for a prey, and to the wicked of the earth for a spoil; robbers shall enter into it and defile it. The land is full of bloody crimes, and the city is full of violence." We might almost imagine that Isaiah had the scene which meets the eye of the modern traveler before him when he spoke of "the highways lying waste," "the wayfaring man ceaseth," "Bashan and Carmel shake off their fruits;" or declared that the judgments of heaven should continue "until the cities be wasted without inhabitants, and the houses without man, and the land be utterly desolate, and the Lord have removed men far away, and there be a great forsaking in the midst of the land." No wonder that the observant traveler, familiar with the words of Scripture, should declare emphatically "the whole of Bashan and Moab is one great fulfilled prophecy." It is literally true that the land is "made empty and waste," "utterly emptied and utterly

spoiled." "Strangers devour it, and it is utterly desolate, as overthrown by strangers."

The instruments by which the doom of prophecy has been brought upon the land have been various, but who would have supposed, especially in the days of Roman magnificence, that the Arab of the desert would ever again resume his place here, and by his very presence, as a wild robber, banish at once security and industry, and the very prospects of a change for the better? And yet this is the fact. "Not a spot of border land from Wady-Musa to Aleppo," said the Druse Sheikh Assad of Hit, "is safe from their raids, and Druses, Moslems and Christians are alike to them. In fact, their hand is against all. When the Anezeh come up in the spring, their flocks cover that plain like locusts, and were it not for our rifles they would not leave us a hoof nor a blade of corn. To-day their horsemen pillage a village here, to-morrow another in the Ghutah of Sham (Damascus), and the day following they strip thé Bagdad caravan. Oh, my Lord! these sons of Ishmael are fleet as gazelles, and fierce as leopards. Would Allah only rid us of them and the Turks, Syria might prosper." The Sheikh of Bozrah declared that his flocks would not be safe even in his own courtyard at night, and that armed sentinels had to patrol continually round their little fields at harvest-time. If it were not for the castle, he said, which has high walls and a strong iron gate, we should be forced to leave Bozrah altogether. We could not stay here a week. The Bedouin

swarm around the ruins. They steal everything they can lay hold of—goat, sheep, cow, horse, or camel—and before we can get on their track they are far away in the desert." Ages have wrought no change in the character of the Ishmaelite Arab, as drawn by the pen of inspiration nearly four thousand years ago: "His hand is against every man, and every man's hand is against him."

But in the providence of God he has been a strange instrument of Divine judgments upon Eastern lands, especially upon Bashan. His inveterate propensity to plunder makes him a pest fatal to all attempts at settled or civilized enterprise. Doubtless Jewish conquest for a time checked his maraudings, and Roman arms taught him respect for Roman civilization. But no sooner does the possessor of the land wax feeble than the irrepressible Ishmaelite, the wild man of the desert, is ready to act the spoiler's part and seize the effects of the dying man. Thus was the doom of the ill-fated land inflicted upon it. A natural stronghold itself, and with cities that were fortresses and private dwellings that were castles, it seemed most improbable that its rich soil should be left to neglect, and that its harvests should be subject to pillage. But the word of prophecy has been fulfilled. "Bashan languishes," and its cities are "without inhabitants." "The spoilers are come upon all high places through the wilderness. No flesh (*can have*) peace."

"I cannot tell," says Mr. Porter, "how deeply I was impressed, when looking out over that noble

plain, rivaling in richness of soil the best of England's counties, thickly studded with cities, towns and villages, intersected with roads, having one of the finest climates in the world, and yet utterly deserted—literally 'without man, without inhabitant, and without beast.' I cannot tell with what mingled feelings of sorrow and of joy, of mourning and of thanksgiving, of fear and of faith, I reflected upon the history of that land, and, taking out my Bible, compared its existing state, as seen with my own eyes, with the numerous predictions regarding it written by the Hebrew prophets. In their day it was populous and prosperous, the fields waved with corn, the hillsides were covered with flocks and herds, the highways were thronged with wayfarers, the cities resounded with the continuous din of a busy population. And yet they wrote as if they had seen the land as I saw it from the ramparts of Bozrah. The spirit of the Omniscient God alone could have guided the hand that penned such predictions as these (Is. vi. 11, 12; Jer. iv. 7; xlviii.)."

Most appropriately does he remark, in the concluding paragraphs of his sketch, "I had often read of Bashan—how the Lord had delivered into the hands of the tribe of Manasseh, Og, its giant king, and all his people. I had observed the statement that a single province of his kingdom, Argob, contained *threescore great cities*, fenced with high walls, gates and bars, besides *unwalled towns a great many*. I had examined my map, and had found that *the whole of Bashan* was not larger than an

ordinary English county. I confess I was astonished; and though my faith in the divine record was not shaken, yet I felt that some strange statistical mystery hung over the passage, which required to be cleared up. That one city, nurtured by the commerce of a mighty empire, might grow till her people could be numbered by millions, I could well believe; that two, or even three, great commercial cities might spring up, in favored localities, almost side by side, I could believe, too; but that *sixty* walled cities, besides *unwalled towns a great many*, should exist in a small province, at such a remote age, so far from the sea, with no rivers and little commerce, appeared to be inexplicable. Inexplicable, mysterious though it appeared, it was true. On the spot, with my own eyes, I had now verified it. A list of more than *one hundred* ruined cities and villages, situated in these mountains alone, I had in my hands; and on the spot I had tested it and found it accurate, though not complete. More than thirty of these I had myself visited, or passed close by; many others I had seen in the distance. The extent of some of them I measured and have already stated. Of their high antiquity I could not, after inspecting them, entertain a doubt, and I have explained why. Here, then, we have a venerable record, more than three thousand years old, containing incidental descriptions, statements and statistics which few men would be inclined to receive on trust; which not a few are now attempting to throw aside as 'glaring absurdities' and 'gross exaggerations,' and yet

which close and thorough examination proves to be accurate in the most minute details. Here, again, are prophecies of *ruin and utter desolation* pronounced and recorded when this country was in the height of its prosperity—when its vast plains waved with corn, when its hillsides were clothed with vineyards, when its cities and villages resounded with the busy hum of a teeming population; and now, after my survey of Bashan, if I were asked to describe the present state of plains, mountains, towns, and villages, I could not possibly select language more appropriate, more accurate or more graphic than the language of these very prophecies. My unalterable conviction is, that the eye of the Omniscient God alone could have foreseen a doom so terrible as that which has fallen on Moab and Bashan."

Is it necessary to add anything more to the traveler's words? Let those who are accustomed to sift evidence and weigh testimony, estimate, by the severest critical rules, the importance of a discovery like that which, after an interval of more than three thousand years, serves to verify, in the most minute particulars, one of the most surprising statements of the sacred historian. Let him calculate the probabilities that a land like Bashan, with a soil of almost fabulous fertility, and with houses of an imperishable structure, numerous enough to accommodate a crowded population, should become almost utterly deserted, bereft of inhabitants, as well as of all signs of industry and all the forms of orderly government;

and then let him say whether Moses was a writer of fable, or whether the prophets were simply the copyists of their own fancies.

Bashan is only a single witness, but its testimony is most remarkable. It might be well deemed incredible if it had not been subjected to the test. As it is, we place it by the side of other evidence that "holy men spake of old as they were moved by the Holy Ghost."



THE BROOK JABBOK.



THE CITIES OF MOAB AND AMMON.

SOUTH of Bashan, and between the Israelites in their desert encampments and the land of Canaan, lay the limited territory of the Moabites and the Ammonites, the last of whom had been driven from a portion of their lands by the powerful and warlike Amorites, from the west of the Jordan. The two nations were kindred, both of them the descendants of Lot, and their near relation was continued by constant intercourse and frequent alliance through their subsequent history. Both were filled with dread on hearing of the onward march of the Israelites, and both are said (Deut. xxiii. 4) to have hired Baalam to curse them.

At first the command was given to treat them with kindness (Deut. ii. 9, 19): "Distress not the Moabites, neither contend with them in battle. . . . The children of Ammon, distress them not nor meddle with them, for I will not give thee of the land of the children of Ammon any possession." But causes of enmity arose. The Ammonites could not forget that the Israelites had taken possession of that portion of their land of which they had been deprived by the Amorites. Perhaps the forbearance of the

Israelites was misinterpreted, and the two allied nations on the east of the Jordan were tempted by it to encroach upon their neighbors on the west of the river. Border jealousies doubtless kept up a constant irritation, and century after century the Moabites and Ammonites—some few periods excepted—were numbered among the foes with whom the Israelites were forced to contend.

The successive invasions of their territory by the latter were not forgotten. The Ammonites were subdued by Jephthah; scattered with great slaughter by Saul; repulsed upon their invasion (in alliance with the Moabites) of Judah by Jehoshaphat, and forced to pay tribute by Jotham. The Moabites had a somewhat similar experience. Their king, Eglon, invaded the territory of Benjamin, and ruled for eighteen years at Jericho. They were driven out at last upon the assassination of Eglon by Ehud; but the feud continued till the time of Saul, who, with the patriotic feeling of his tribe, inflicted upon them summary vengeance. David almost extirpated the nation, subjecting those whom he spared to tribute, and when he amassed the spoils of Moabite cities and sanctuaries for the future temple, seemed—at least in a subordinate sense—to fulfill the prophecy of Balaam (Num. xxiv. 17, 19): "There shall come a star out of Jacob and a sceptre shall rise out of Israel, and shall smite the corners of Moab. . . . Out of Jacob shall come he that shall have dominion, and shall destroy him that remaineth of the city."*

* Or of Ar; that is, Moab.

From this blow Moab slowly recovered, and eighty years later paid an enormous tribute to Ahab. Upon his death the people asserted their independence, but the fortunes of battle were against them, and, as if in despair of success by open war, they became a nation of marauders. After an interval of over a century they are again powerful and prosperous, and on the return of the Jews from their captivity at Babylon the Moabites do not hesitate to glory over their weakness. In later times, both Moabites and Ammonites sustain unfriendly relations to the Jews, yet their strength and prosperity continue with little diminution for succeeding centuries, to a date far later than that of the prophecies in which their doom is declared.

This continued prosperity was largely due to the wonderful natural resources of the country. It possessed a soil of remarkable fertility, and amid the numerous valleys, with their water-courses, that were spread over the region from the Arnon to the Jabbok, immense flocks and herds must have found abundant pasture. The plentiful ruins of ancient architecture which still remain attest the truthfulness of the frequent references made by the prophets to the wealth and even luxury of the country. We read of the "vineyards," the "presses," and the "songs of the grape-treaders," of the "plentiful fields," luxuriant as Carmel, of the "hay" and the "summer fruits;" and in the cities of Moab we have brought before us a "great multitude," living in "glory," enjoying great "treasure," crowding the

housetops and the sanctuaries, and with them "priests and princes," enjoying the tribute of honor and the exercise of power.

The extended prophecies against Moab uttered by Isaiah (xv., xvi.) were substantially repeated by Jeremiah (xlviii). Those of the later prophet were uttered several years, at least, before the return of the Jews from Babylon, 536 B. C. They present a vivid picture of the desolation that should overtake the land, the spoiling of the cities, the terror and flight of the people, and the mournful silence that should follow upon the joyous shouting of those that trod the wine-press. One after another, the leading cities are named upon which the curse should come. Judgment should overtake Dibon, and Nebo, Kiriathaim, and Kerioth, and "come upon all the cities of the land of Moab far and near." The inhabitants are called upon to leave them and "dwell in the rock, and be like the dove that maketh her nest in the sides of the hole's mouth." The Lord would "cause to cease in Moab him that offereth in the high places, and him that burneth incense to his gods." Lamentations should be "upon all the housetops of Moab, and in the streets thereof," and Moab should become as a broken vessel. In place of the "loftiness" and "arrogancy," "pride" and "haughtiness of heart," which Moab has exhibited, he should be "a derision and a dismaying to all them about him."

To some extent the Ammonites were to share the fate of Moab. The sentence against them both is

repeatedly uttered in the same prophecy. They were conjoined in guilt, and they were to be conjoined in their doom. This doom was inevitable (Amos i. 13): "For three transgressions of the children of Ammon, and for four, I will not turn away the punishment thereof." (Amos ii. 1): "For three transgressions of Moab, and for four, I will not turn away the punishment thereof." The guilt of both is specified. The Ammonites had said (Ezek. xxv. 3), "Aha! against my sanctuary when it was profaned, and against the land of Israel when it was desolate, and against the house of Judah when they went into captivity."* They had "ripped up the women with child of Gilead, that they might enlarge their border." Moab had said, "the house of Judah is like unto all the heathen." He had "burned the bones of the king of Edom into lime." He had "been at ease from his youth," and had "settled on his lees, and not been emptied from vessel to vessel, neither gone into captivity." Hence his pride and arrogancy. For this "his horn should be cut off, and his arm should be broken." Because he had trusted in his works and treasures (Jer. xlviii. 7) he should be taken, and Chemosh should go forth into captivity, with "his priests and princes together." The spoiler should come upon "every city," and no city should escape; the valley also should perish, and the plain should be destroyed.

The destruction should come, both in the case of Moab and of Ammon (Ezek. xxv. 4, 10), from the

* See also Ezek. xxv. 6.

east; and from the language employed in different passages we infer that it should be from Ishmaelite or Bedouin hordes, rather than from a regular army of invasion and conquest. There is no mention of the king of Babylon or forces from the north. This is the more singular, as in the case of other nations we find in almost every instance that they were first to fall by the conquests of some encroaching, powerful and ambitious neighbor. But no Nebuchadnezzar, no Cyrus or Alexander, was in their case to be the rod of the Lord's anger. Their prosperity did in fact survive all these mighty conquerors, and centuries later they were prepared to cope with the Jewish forces under the Maccabees. Yet their destruction at last was to be complete and signal. (Zeph. ii. 8): "Moab shall be as Sodom, and the children of Ammon as Gomorrah." (Jer. xlviii. 42): "Moab shall be destroyed from being a people, because he hath magnified himself against the Lord." "Fear and the pit and the snare" should come upon him—a graphic symbol of the terror and danger of Arab vengeance. (Ezek. xxv. 10): The Ammonites should become a possession for "the men of the east," and "not be remembered among the nations."

Several of the leading cities are named, and their fate is described. Jeremiah (xlix. 2) declares that "Rabbah shall be a desert heap," and Ezekiel (xxv. 5) adds, "I will make Rabbah a stable for camels, and the Ammonites a couching-place for flocks;" while Amos adds (i. 14), "I will kindle a

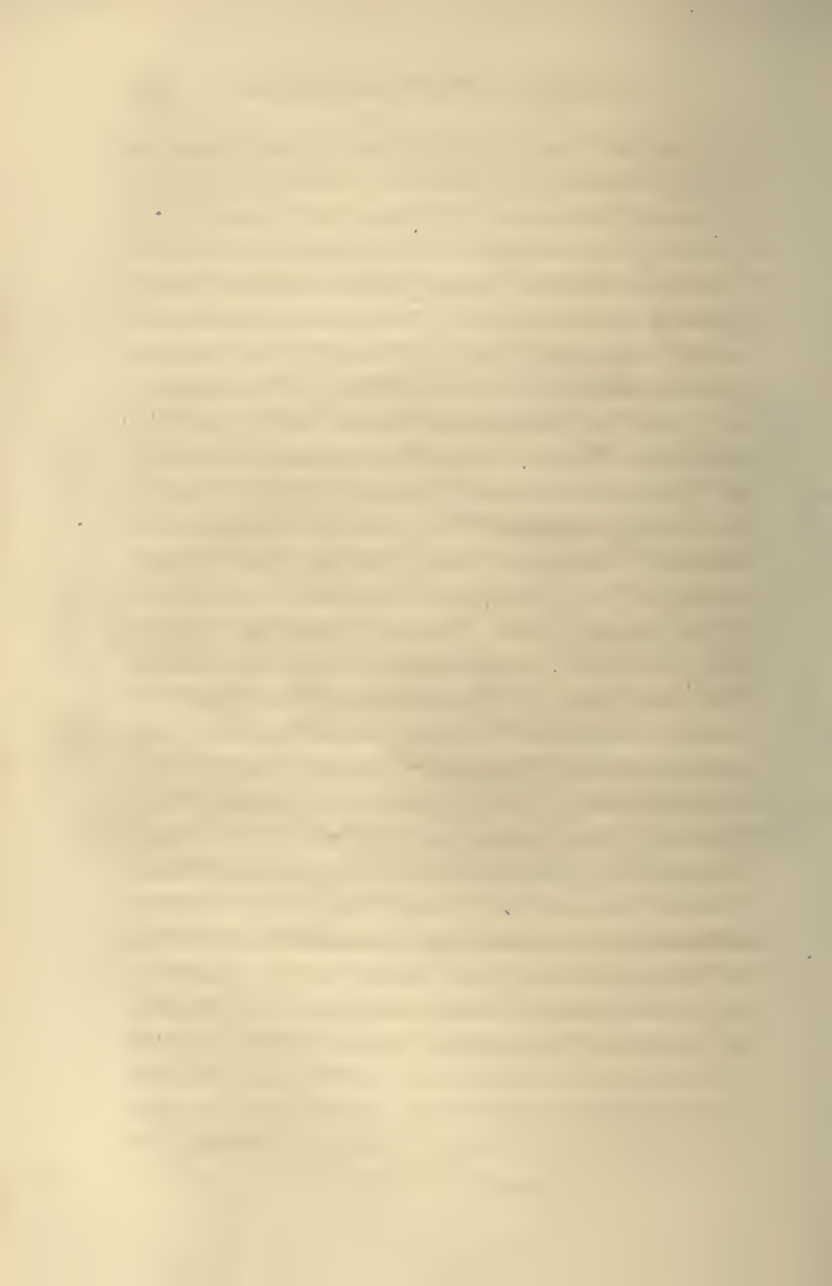
fire in the wall of Rabbah, and it shall devour the palaces thereof, with shouting in the day of battle, with a tempest in the day of the whirlwind." The other cities should share its fate. (Jer. xlix. 3): "Ai is spoiled." (Jer. xlviii.): "Judgment is come upon the plain country;" and Kerioth and Bozrah are named in the extended list which closes summarily with "all the cities of the land of Moab."

With the language of the several prophets before us, and the evident harmony of fact amid their diversities of description and figure, we have only to turn to the words of modern travelers to see how remarkably their predictions have been fulfilled. The map of Volney's travels, in the part devoted to Moab, where great and wealthy cities once stood, is characterized by the ruins of towns. Burckhardt speaks of the still subsisting ruins of Eleale, Heshbon, Meon, Dibon, Aroer, &c. Other travelers dwell upon its waste and desolate appearance. "The wanderers," Bedouins of the desert, have come (Jer. xlviii. 12) and made Moab to wander, "emptying his vessels and breaking their bottles." For security the dwellers of cities have left them to "dwell in the rock and be like the dove that maketh her nest in the sides of the hole's mouth." Moab is covered with "shame," and has become "a derision." Travelers have spoken of "many artificial caves, . . with chambers and small sleeping apartments." The cities are abandoned, while the rocks are tenanted.

The same is also true of the land of the Ammon-



Rabbah of the Ammonites. From the East. Showing the perennial stream and part of the Citadel Hill.
Page 173.



ites, conjoined with, and to some extent indistinguishable from, that of Moab. In a region where the soil of the valley is still remarkably fertile, and which is here and there to be seen covered with flocks, the ancient cities can serve no purpose except to furnish that shelter to beasts which they once afforded to the nobles of the land. The leading city of the Ammonites was Rabbah. It was beautiful in situation and remarkable for the strength of its position, while the productiveness of the surrounding region, still observable, gave assurance of its permanent prosperity. The perennial stream which still flows through the lower city, and which gave it the title of "city of waters," was of great value to enable it to resist for two years the siege which David directed against it. Centuries later it vied with Jerusalem in fame and strength. After the Christian era it continued to flourish, and its magnificent theatre, 240 feet broad, was said to be the largest in Syria.* Justin Martyr (A. D. 140) speaks of the large Ammonite population of the city, which subsequently became the seat of a Christian bishop.

A few centuries later and its long-delayed doom overtook it. It is now most remarkable for the extent and desolation of its ruins. In this respect it stands pre-eminent, even among the cities of Syria. The place has been visited by Burckhardt, Seetzen, Irby, Lindsay and others, who all testify to the utter and complete overthrow of its ancient pride. The stream which once assisted to render it almost im-

* Smith's Dictionary.

pregnable still flows beneath a huge arched bridge, and the remains of the massive citadel, built of large square stones put together without cement, attest its former strength. But it is now literally "a desolate heap," and the remains of its public edifices are subjected to the abuse and contempt of the Bedouin, who may very fitly make them *stables for camels.*

If now we turn to the list of the cities of Moab against whom, specifically, judgment was pronounced, we find the fulfillment of prophecy no less exact. Holon (Jer. xlviii. 21) has utterly perished. Its very name, except in the Scripture record, has sunk to oblivion, and its site cannot be identified. Of Jahazah, the last that we hear in history is a dubious mention of it by Eusebius. Mephaath was, in the third century of our era, a military post, designed to hold the Arab tribes in check, but no trace of it has been discovered in recent times. Dibon has been questionably identified with *Dhiban* by modern travelers, who agree in their description of its extensive ruins. Nebo has not been explored by modern travelers, and its site is known only by conjecture. Diblathaim is still a problem for archeologists. Of Kiriathaim history knows nothing since the days of Eusebius, who speaks of it as a Christian village. Beth-gamul, says Porter,* "is unquestionably one of the most remarkable places east of the Jordan. It is as large as Bozrah. It contains many massive houses built of huge blocks of basalt; their roofs and doors, and even the gates of the city,

* Land of Bashan, &c., p. 69.

being formed of the same material. Though deserted for many centuries, the houses, streets, walls and gates are in as perfect preservation as if the city had been inhabited until within the last few years."

The name of Beth-meon is still attached to a ruined place of considerable size, a short distance south-west of Hesbân. Kerioth is identified by Porter* with the modern Kureiyeh, of which he says: "The ruins are of great extent. . . . No large public building now exists entire, but there are traces of many; and in the streets and lanes are numerous fragments of columns and other vestiges of ancient grandeur. . . . Kerioth was reckoned (Jer. xlviii. 41) one of the strongholds of the Plain of Moab. Standing in the midst of widespread rock-fields, the passes through which could be easily defended, and encircled by massive ramparts, the remains of which are still there, I saw, and every traveler can see, how applicable is Jeremiah's reference, and how strong this city must once have been. I could not but remark, too, while wandering through the streets and lanes, that the private houses bear the marks of the most remote antiquity. The few towers and fragments of temples, which inscriptions show to have been erected in the first centuries of the Christian era, are modern in comparison with the colossal walls and massive stone doors of the private houses. The simplicity of their style, their low roofs, the ponderous blocks of roughly-hewn stone with which they are built, the great thickness

* Land of Bashan, &c., p. 82.

of the walls, and the heavy slabs which form the ceiling, all point to a period far earlier than the Roman age, and probably even antecedent to the conquest of the country by the Israelites."

He adds :* "Kerioth is a frontier town. It is on the confines of the uninhabited plain where the fierce Ishmaelite roams at will, 'his hand against every man.' . . . The *wandering* (Jer. xlviii. 12) Bedouin are now the scourge of Moab; they cause the few inhabitants that remain in it to settle down amid the fastnesses of the rocks and mountains, and often to *wander* from city to city, in the vain hope of finding rest and security." Well may it be said of them (Jer. xlviii. 28): "O ye that dwell in Moab, leave the cities and dwell in the rock." The "wanderers" have "caused Moab to wander."

Bozrah, already mentioned in connection with Bashan, is the last name mentioned specifically in the list of the cities of Moab. Its very name meant "fortress," or, by implication, a magnificent and strong city. The vestiges of its former greatness are still abundant. "Its ruins," says Porter,† "are nearly five miles in circuit; its walls are lofty and massive, and its castle is one of the largest and strongest fortresses in Syria. Among the ruins I saw two theatres, six temples and ten or twelve churches and mosques, besides palaces, baths, fountains, aqueducts, triumphal arches, and other structures, almost without number. . . . Some of the

* Land of Bashan, &c., p. 85. † Ibid., p. 64.

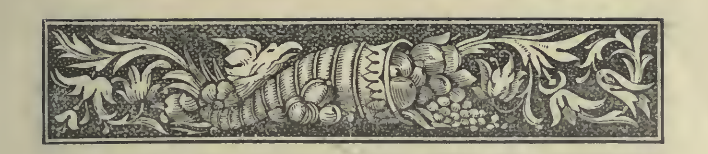
buildings I saw there would grace the proudest capital of modern Europe."

He found the streets mostly covered, and in some places completely blocked up with fallen buildings and heaps of rubbish. The principal structures were half-buried in broken columns and piled-up ruins of roofs and pediments. Some parts of its wall, however, were still almost perfect—"a massive rampart of solid masonry, fifteen feet thick and nearly thirty high, with great square towers at intervals." "One sees the splendid Roman palace and gorgeous Greek temple and shapeless Arab *dukkan* side by side, alike in ruins, just as if the words of Isaiah had been written with special reference to this city of Moab: 'He shall bring down their pride, together with the spoil of their hands. And the fortress of the high fort of thy walls shall he bring down, lay low and bring to the ground, even to the dust' (Isaiah xxv. 11, 12)."

Yet this once magnificent city, which could boast a population of at least 100,000, is now inhabited by only twenty families, and these are kept in constant apprehension from the marauding propensities of the "wanderers" of the desert. In its desolation it is not alone, for the judgment is pronounced, not only on the cities already named, but "upon all the cities of the land of Moab, far and near." Between Bozrah and Beth-gamul are quite a number of these, eleven of which were visited by Mr. Graham. "Their ramparts, their houses, their streets, their gates and doors" says Mr. Porter, "are nearly all

perfect, and yet they are *desolate, without man*. . . . In the whole of these vast plains, north and south, east and west, DESOLATION reigns supreme. The cities, the highways, the vineyards, the fields, are all alike silent as the grave, except during the periodical migrations of the Bedouins, whose flocks, herds and people eat, trample down and waste all before them. The long-predicted doom of Moab is now fulfilled: '*The spoiler shall come upon every city, and no city shall escape; the valley also shall perish and the plain shall be destroyed, as the Lord hath spoken. Give wings unto Moab, that it may flee and get away; for the cities thereof shall be desolate, without any to dwell therein.*'

"But why should I transcribe more? Why should I continue to compare the predictions of the Bible with the state of the country? The harmony is complete. No traveler can possibly fail to see it, and no conscientious man can fail to acknowledge it. The best, the fullest, the most instructive commentary I ever saw on the forty-eighth chapter of Jeremiah was that inscribed by the finger of God on the panorama spread out around me as I stood on the battlements of the castle of Salcah."



PHILISTIA AND ITS FIVE CITIES

THE origin of the Philistines is involved in no little obscurity. It is even uncertain whether they belonged to the race of Ham or Shem. There is some reason for believing them to be the same people with the "Shepherds," who acquired for a time the dominion of Lower Egypt, but were at length expelled by a revival of Egyptian national feeling. The country which they occupied lay between Palestine and Egypt, but after the time of Abraham and before that of Joshua they had changed their quarters and advanced northward into the Shepelah, or Plain of Philistia.

This plain has been in all ages remarkable for its fertility.* Its fields of standing corn, its vineyards and olive-yards are incidentally mentioned in Scripture, and in the time of Elisha its abundant harvests tempted the famished Israelites to sojourn there. The crops which it yielded were alone sufficient to ensure national wealth, while its characteristic features fitted it for the residence of a warlike people.

* Smith's Bible Dictionary.

The plain itself favored the use of war-chariots, at the same time that its occasional heights offered advantages for fortified cities and strongholds.

Its very position, moreover, was favorable to commerce. In all ages it must have been the great thoroughfare between Syria and Phenicia on the north and Egypt and Arabia on the south. Ashdod and Gaza, two of its leading cities, were the keys of Egypt, commanding the trade that passed through the country, while history testifies that the latter city was a storehouse for Arabian produce. Gaza and Askalon had their sea-ports, and a Philistine navy came in conflict with the vessels of Egypt. Smiths, armorers and builders attained among the people a high degree of skill, and the images of the Philistines, and their golden mice and emerods, attest their acquaintance with the founder's and the goldsmith's arts.

Their wars with neighboring nations sufficiently evince their military prowess. More than twelve centuries before Christ they are said to have been engaged in conflict with the Sidonians, and to have forced them, for better security, to remove their capital to Tyre. Assisted by their allies, they ventured, though unsuccessfully, to attack Rameses III., of Egypt, and for successive generations, from the times of the Judges till the reign of David, they gave occasion for perpetual apprehension to the people of Israel. Some of the latter were carried off by them, and either held as captives or sold as slaves. Even in the times of the prophets their predatory invasions

were continued, and for their wickedness the judgments of heaven were denounced against them.

The cities of Philistia continued, however, to enjoy a considerable degree of prosperity, although they were a common prize for the rival and conflicting powers of Assyria and Egypt. Repeatedly were they the scenes of fierce conflict, yet fortified again after their capture by the foe. Though they passed from the control of one nation to another till the time of Alexander, they commanded a certain measure of respect. But their prophetic doom was inevitable, and in the long course of subsequent centuries it was accurately and terribly fulfilled.

In the days of Isaiah the Philistines were still strong enough to warrant the prediction (Isaiah ix. 12), "they shall devour Israel with open mouth;" but soon we find (xi. 14) that Ephraim and Judah were to "fly upon the shoulders of the Philistines toward the west." Jeremiah (xxv. 20) utters threatenings against "all the kings of the land of the Philistines, and Ashkelon, and Azzah (Gaza), and Ekron, and the remnant of Ashdod." He announces (xlvii. 4) "the day that cometh to spoil all the Philistines." "Baldness is come upon Gaza, Ashkelon is cut off with the remnant of their valley." The Lord hath given to his sword "a charge against Ashkelon and against the seashore." The flood that was to "overflow the land and all that is therein, the city and them that dwell therein," was to come "out of the north," "while at the noise of the stamping of the hoofs of the strong horses, at

the rushing of the chariots, and at the rumbling of the wheels, the fathers shall not look back to the children for feebleness of hands."

Ezekiel (xxv. 15–17) denounced upon the Philistines "great vengeance with furious rebukes." The Lord would "stretch out his hand upon them, to cut off the Cherethims and destroy the remnant of the sea coast" (haven of the sea). For their guilt had culminated, in that they had "dealt by revenge," and had "taken vengeance with a despiteful heart to destroy" Judah "for the old hatred."*

The prophet Amos (i. 6–8) pronounces the doom of the cities of the Philistines, while declaring also the occasion of it: "Thus saith the Lord: for three transgressions of Gaza, and for four, I will not turn away the punishment thereof; because they carried away captive the whole captivity, to deliver them up to Edom. But I will send a fire on the wall of Gaza which shall devour the palaces thereof. And I will cut off the inhabitant from Ashdod, and him that holdeth the sceptre from Ashkelon, and I will turn my hand against Ekron, and the remnant of the Philistines shall perish, saith the Lord God." These words were uttered probably many years before those of Isaiah's prophecy.

Obediah prophesies that the people "of the plain" shall "possess the Philistines." Zephaniah declares (ii. 7) that "the sea coast shall be dwellings and cottages for shepherds and folds for flocks, and the coast shall be for the remnant of the house of Judah;

* The margin reads, *with perpetual hatred.*

they shall feed thereupon; in the houses of Ashkelon shall they lie down in the evening." Zechariah (ix. 5–7) foretells the terror with which Ashkelon, Gaza and Ekron shall regard the fall of Tyre, and that "the king shall perish from Gaza, and Ashkelon shall not be inhabited. And a bastard shall dwell in Ashdod, and I will cut off the pride of the Philistines. And I will take away his blood out of his mouth and his abominations from between his teeth; but he that remaineth, even he, shall be for our God, and he shall be as a governor in Judah, and Ekron as a Jebusite."

These various prophecies, accordant with one another, were written at various periods during the two centuries which witnessed successively the captivities of Israel (741 B. C.) and of Judah (606 B. C.). The power of the Jewish nation was rent in twain, and there was little prospect, from the growing power of Assyria and Babylon, that it would ever be restored. Yet at this very time the doom of Philistia is pronounced, and it is repeatedly coupled with prophecies of the triumph or prosperity of Judah.

Yet it was centuries before the doom of the cities of the Philistines fully overtook them. The Assyrians, under Sargon, besieged Gaza in the year B. C. 720, and in 712, in their expedition against Egypt, possessed themselves of Ashdod, the key of that country. Under Sennacherib, some twenty-two years later, the Assyrians attacked Philistia. Ashkelon was taken and its dependencies were

plundered. Ashdod, Ekron and Gaza submitted, and received, as their reward, a portion of the territory of Judah. Ashdod remained under Assyrian control till its capture (about 660 B. C.) by Psammeticus, king of Egypt. But Egyptian power was vain to resist the progress of Nebuchadnezzar. Gaza was taken by him, and the population of the whole plain was reduced by the invading armies to the "remnant" spoken of by Jeremiah. During the Jewish captivity the "old hate" of the Philistines was displayed toward their conquered neighbors, while the accession of Cyrus and the victories of the Persians brought a restoration of favor to the Jews, and undoubted retribution, through them, upon the Philistines. Thus, nearly a century after several of the prophecies were uttered, did the judgments denounced against the guilty cities begin to overtake them.

But it was only the beginning. Philistia may well have enjoyed a moderate prosperity under the Persians, but it shared largely in the fate of neighboring kingdoms in the centuries which followed. Alexander captured Gaza after a two months' siege. Its vicinity was subsequently the battle-ground between Demetrius Poliorcetes and Ptolemy. Antiochus the Great invaded Philistia and took Gaza, 198 B. C. The other cities experienced, perhaps, along with Gaza, a varied fortune. They were the prize for the ambition of rival powers. But it is evident that down to the Christian era they maintained a considerable degree of splendor and importance.

Gaza was in some respects the most important of the five confederate cities subject to "the five lords of the Philistines," and has an almost unbroken history from a very early period to the present day. Situated in the south-western corner of Palestine, on the frontier toward Egypt, it lay on the direct route from the valley of the Nile to Syria. Before the call of Abraham it was a "border" city of the Canaanites. Joshua failed to subdue it, and though for a time it passed into the hands of Judah, and its gates were carried off by Samson, it remained in the hands of the Philistines, almost without interruption, till the time of Solomon. Its military strength and importance are attested by the sieges to which it was successively subjected. Even Alexander the Great was unable to take it till after a protracted siege. After the Christian era it retained no little importance. A Roman historian speaks of it as a great city and properly fortified. It was captured by the Arabs in A. D. 634, and some of the most important campaigns of the Crusaders took place in its neighborhood. In the twelfth century it was garrisoned by the Knights Templars, but fell into the hands of Saladin after the disastrous battle of Hattin, A. D. 1170. It still bears the name of *Ghuzzeh*, the modern city occupying the site of the old, on an oblong hill, as well as valleys to the north and south. There are neither walls nor forts, but the places of certain gates belonging to the ancient walls are still pointed out. On the hill, where the palaces, mosques, khans and nearly all

the stone houses now are, many granite and marble columns and heavy old stones are found mingled with more recent works. The entire population of Christians and Moslems amounts to about eighteen thousand;* but "an air of decay hangs over Gaza, partly because many buildings are really falling to ruins, and partly because the stone of which it is built is old and saturated with saltpetre, which effloresces and disintegrates with great rapidity. A house soon comes to look old that is built of these rotten ruins." Yet the climate of the place is not oppressive, though spoken of as almost tropical. Its water is obtained from wells, some of which are said to be one hundred and fifty feet deep. The city is surrounded by gardens, over which the tall palm trees and the taller minarets tower pre-eminent.

Ashdod (or Azotus), like Gaza, was not far from the sea coast—some three miles—and about thirty miles from the southern frontier of Palestine, nearly midway from Gaza to Joppa. It stood on an elevation overlooking the plain, and the natural advantages of its position were improved by fortifications of great strength. Repeatedly besieged, it passed into the hands of different conquerors, and was at length destroyed by the Maccabees. Upon the conquest of Judea by the Romans it was restored by Gabinius, but never recovered its importance. It is now an inconsiderable, wretched village. A few old stone buildings are to be seen "stowed away among the wretched mud hovels, so as not to be

* Thomson's The Land and the Book.



The Site of Ashdod; Philistia.

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easily examined." The people are rude to the traveler, whose curiosity is checked by their impertinence. The village is buried beneath forests of cactus and overshadowed by sycamores, which impart to the place a singular aspect. The plain eastward seems boundless, very fertile, and not ill cultivated. But the palaces, temples and houses are all gone; terraced orchards now occupy their places, clothing the hillside from base to summit. Not a vestige of Dagon's temple is there now. On the southern declivity, toward the noble but partially cultivated plain which spreads out before the eye of the traveler gazing from the hill-top, may be seen old building stones, with fragments of columns and sculptured capitals, "piled up in the fences of the little fields and in the walls of goat and sheep-pens," attesting the conversion of prophecy into history: "The sea coast shall be dwellings and cottages for shepherds and folds for flocks." Truly might it be said: "A bastard shall rule in Ashdod, and I will cut off the pride of the Philistines."

Ten miles east of Ashdod is the site of ancient Gath.* It stood upon a lofty, conspicuous hill, two hundred feet high. On the top of this are the foundations of an old castle, and great numbers of hewn stones are built up in the walls of the terraces that run along the declivities. On the north-east there are traces of ancient buildings, and here stands

* The site has been determined by the Rev. J. L. Porter, who made a tour through Philistia ir 1857, specially to search for the long-lost city.

the modern village, extending along the whole northern face of the hill. Old stones are still to be seen in the walls of the houses, and two pillars remain standing on their pedestals. These, and the cisterns excavated in the rock on the sides of the hill, together with the remains of ancient buildings, are all that is left to attest the grandeur of the city of Goliath of Gath—a city which was the scene of frequent struggles, which occupied a strong position on the border between Judah and Philistia, which was the key to both countries, and was repeatedly captured and recaptured. It was first among the leading cities of the country to meet its doom, and its very name disappears from the catalogue of the later prophets.

The only antiquity of Ekron, ten miles northeast of Gath, and now known as Akir—is a large, deep well,* such, probably, as the servants of Abraham dug at Gerar. About forty or fifty mud hovels compose the wretched village. Its banditti-looking men, with large daggers in their girdles, its women in rags, its children, many of them stark naked, compose a population in keeping with the scene presented by its narrow lanes, encumbered with heaps of filth and rubbish. "Yet," says the traveler, Porter, "this is all that marks the site and bears the name of the royal city of Ekron. There is not a solitary vestige of royalty there now. With feelings which it would be difficult to describe, we took out our Bibles and read the doom pronounced

* Smith's Bible Dictionary speaks of two wells.

upon it by the Hebrew prophet while it yet stood in all the pride of its strength and beauty (Zeph. ii. 4), 'Ekron shall be rooted up.'"

The royal city of Ashkelon, which completes the list of the five belonging to the five lords of the Philistines, lies nearly midway between Gaza and Ashdod. It retained a respectable rank even after the Christian era, and rose to considerable importance. Near the town—though all traces of them have now vanished—were the temple and sacred lake of the Syrian Venus. Its soil was remarkably fertile, and it was celebrated for its wine, its honey, its cypresses, figs, olives and pomegranates. In the time of the Crusades, Ashkelon played a memorable part. "In it," says Stanley, "was entrenched the last gleam of history which has thrown its light over the plains of Philistia, and within the walls and towers now standing Richard held his court." Its position is one of great natural strength. Its walls are built on a ridge of rock which winds in a semicircular curve around the town, and terminates at each end in the sea. Yet its doom was inevitable. Its present condition cannot be more fitly described than in the words of Porter:

"Before us on the shore (of the Mediterranean) was a green oasis in the midst of the white waste of sand—orchards of apples and apricots, palm trees rising gracefully over them, and the soft and varied foliage of vines and pomegranates forming a dense underwood. Behind this desert paradise, and protecting it from the all-devouring drift, rose what

appeared to be a line of jagged cliffs. We rode straight to the oasis, and, entering, discovered in the midst of it the little village of Jureh. Looking up, we now saw that the cliffs resolved themselves into the ruined ramparts of Ashkelon. We rode on. Our horses saw the rugged height, and seemed to know their task. Onward and upward they proceed, now gathering their feet close together on a block of masonry, now springing lightly as gazelles across a chasm, now scrambling painfully up a shattered wall; and at length, with a leap and a snort of triumph, gaining the very summit of the battlements.

"What a scene of desolation there burst at once upon our view! With all my previous experience of Syrian ruins—and I had seen Bozrah and Kenath, Gadara and Samaria, Baalbec and Palmyra—I was not prepared for this. Such utter, terrible desolation I had never met before. The site of Ashkelon is in form like an old Roman theatre—the sea in front, and the ground once occupied by the city rising gradually and uniformly to the wall, which runs in a semi-circle from shore to shore. The whole site was before us. Not a house, nor a fragment of a house, remains standing. Not a foundation of a temple or palace can be traced entire. One-half of it is occupied by miniature fields and vineyards and fig-orchards; rubbish mounds here and there among them, and great heaps of hewn stones and broken shafts and sculptured slabs of granite and marble. The rude fences exhibit similar painful evidences of ancient wealth and magnificence. The

other half of the site was still more fearfully desolate. It is so thickly covered with drift sand that not a heap of rubbish, not a vestige of a ruin remains visible, save here and there, where the top of a column rises like a tombstone above the smooth surface. The sand is fast advancing; it has already covered some of the highest fragments of the southern and western wall, and ere a quarter of a century has passed, the site of Ashkelon will be blotted out for ever.

"Dismounting, I took out my Bible and read the doom pronounced upon Ashkelon by the prophets Zechariah (iv. 5) and Zephaniah (ii. 4): 'Ashkelon shall not be inhabited;' 'Ashkelon shall be a desolation.' And it is a desolation; it *shall not* be, CAN NOT be inhabited. As we stood there and looked we said to each other: 'The eye of the Omniscient God alone could have foreseen such a doom as this.'"

Of the other cities of Philistia a few words only need be said. Lydda, embowered in verdure and encircled with olive-groves, still retains in its ruins—especially in those of the church built by England's lion-hearted Richard—memorials of its departed glory. A low, broken wall, and a number of stone troughs round the mouth of an old well, are nearly all that is left to mark the site or bear the name of Lachish. Eglon—utterly desolate—is a shapeless mass of ruins and rubbish, strewn over a rounded hillock, with two or three light marble shafts standing up among them, like tombstones in an old cemetery.

Beth-Shemesh does not contain a single house; heaps of ruins strewn over a broad ridge, and half concealed by thistles and poppies and bright marigolds, mark the site of the old city.

It is thus that, to the most minute particular, the prophecy against Philistia has been fulfilled: "I will send a fire upon Gaza which shall devour the palaces thereof." "Baldness is come upon Gaza." Such is the language of the prophets. To this the infidel Volney responds: "The ruins of white marble, sometimes found at Gaza, prove that it was formerly the abode of luxury and opulence. It has shared in the general destruction; and, notwithstanding its proud title of the capital of Palestine, it is now no more than a defenceless village, peopled by at most two thousand inhabitants."* "The king shall perish from Gaza," said the prophet. "Gaza," remarks Richardson, "is truly without a king." "Ashkelon is cut off with the remnant of their valley," was the prophetic sentence. "In the houses of Ashkelon" the flocks were to "lie down in the evening." He "that holdeth the sceptre" was to be "cut off from Ashkelon." What says the traveler?—"Not a house, nor a fragment of a house, remains standing." One-half of its site, we are told, is occupied by miniature fields, while the other half is still more fearfully desolate. Long ago the flocks must have lain down to their evening rest in the houses of Ashkelon. "The lofty towers of Ashkelon," says Richardson,

* This was at the close of the last century.

"lie scattered on the ground, and the ruins within its walls do not shelter a human being."

"A bastard shall dwell in Ashdod," was the language of the inspired record. Porter has spoken of the mongrel character of the few rude inhabitants, and it is more than possible that the history of past centuries, if it could be recovered, would show a still more minute fulfillment. "The remnant of Ashdod," as well as Ashkelon, Gaza and Ekron, were to drink "the cup at the Lord's hand," thus to be made "a desolation, an astonishment, an hissing and a curse." In the words of every traveler, including Volney, we read the description of what they saw answering to this prediction.

"I will turn my hand against Ekron," was the language of the prophet. It was to be filled with dismay at the fall of Tyre, and this dismay was to be shared by Ashkelon and Gaza. As the great Macedonian conqueror advanced in his victorious march, and the city of merchant princes surrendered at last to his protracted siege, the whole region to the south must have been made to tremble with apprehension. They could not hope to resist. Thus, too, the overflowing flood came "out of the north." Surely the present miserable condition of Ekron is sufficient testimony that the Lord hath turned his hand against it.

The "sword" of the Lord had "a charge," not only against Ashkelon, but "against the sea shore." God would "destroy the remnant of the sea coast," or the haven of the sea. "The coast" was to be

for the remnant of the house of Judah. It is impossible for us to read the accounts of travelers concerning the encroachments of the sand upon the ancient harbors, the once fertile sea coast, and even the remains of former splendor, without feeling that these words have had a literal fulfillment.

Nor was this all. The history of the Maccabees shows us how "Ephraim and Judah" did indeed fly upon the shoulders of the Philistines toward the west," and how "the coast" was in fact "for the remnant of the house of Judah." "The day" came "to spoil all the Philistines." They experienced "great vengeance with furious rebukes." "The remnant" of the Philistines, as a nation, has long since "perished," and "the people of the plain" have come into the "possession" of their desolated domain, and "the pride" of the Philistines has been "cut off." Thus the iniquities of their idol-worship have come to an end, and God has taken away "their blood from their mouth and their abominations from between their teeth." "He that remained" —the people that were spared after the utter overthrow of the Philistine power—became largely Christian; and of them it was fulfilled, "he shall be for our God,* and he shall be as a governor in Judah, and Ekron as a Jebusite."

It is impossible to note the specific character of these various predictions without seeing that they

* Gaza, Ashkelon and Ashdod were each the see of a bishop from the days of Constantine to the invasion of the Saracens *Keith.*

require a variously minute and accurate fulfillment. Human foresight would never have doomed such plains as those which surrounded the great cities of Philistia, and in their inexhaustible and wonderful fertility gave promise of sustaining a dense population, to permanent neglect and comparative barrenness. It would never have anticipated that those cities which, as strongholds, had resisted so many sieges, and which were capable of being made the capitals of empire, would have become ruinous, and in some cases uninhabited heaps. It would never have pictured them as shelters for flocks or fields for their pasture. It would never have apprehended, not merely the destruction of harbors by the encroaching sands, but the burial of the remains of ancient splendor and the extension of the desert from the same cause. Nor would it have regarded as probable the acquisition by the Jews of this strongly fortified region, especially after the captivity, first of the ten and afterward of the two tribes, and the absorption of the surrounding regions by the powerful ambition of the great Eastern empires. But, against all antecedent probabilities, the words of the prophets concerning Philistia have been accurately and literally fulfilled.





TYRE.

A MOURNFUL and solitary silence now prevails along the shore which once resounded with the world's debate." In that sentence, embodying in it the facts which declare the fulfillment of long-uttered prophecy, Gibbon closes his chapter on the Crusades. He speaks of the Phenician coast of the Mediterranean, where the commercial fleets of Tyre and Sidon once proudly rode.

Volney, in his "Travels," speaks of Tyre as "in ancient times the theatre of an immense commerce and navigation, the nurse of arts and sciences, and the city of, perhaps, the most industrious and active people the world has yet seen."* Yet he describes it in his time as a village containing "only fifty or sixty poor families, which live obscurely on the produce of their little grounds and a trifling fishery. The houses they occupy are no longer, as in the time of Strabo, edifices of three or four stories high, but wretched huts, ready to crumble to pieces."†

Tyre, the Hebrew name of which—Tzor—signifies rock, is situated on the eastern coast of the Medi-

* Volney's Travels, ii., 128. † Ibid., 130.

terranean, somewhat more than one hundred miles north of Jerusalem. It was for ages the capital of Phenicia, and the leading seaport of that whole region. Its earliest site was on the mainland, and its earliest history belongs to a remote antiquity. Rawlinson regards the name of Syria as synonymous with Tyria, or the region of Tyre, which of course implies that the name of the city, and consequently the city itself, must be very ancient. Herodotus, who visited it four and a half centuries before Christ, and who describes the riches and splendor of its temple dedicated to Hercules, relates that he was told by the priests that it was coeval with the city, and that it was then two thousand three hundred years old.* There is nothing to render this improbable, unless it be that for many centuries no mention is made of Tyre, and that Homer does not speak of it in his poems. But the people of the region were known, at the time when the Jews took possession of Canaan, as Sidonians, from Sidon, distant from Tyre less than twenty English miles, and for a time, doubtless, dividing with it the honors and riches of the sea.

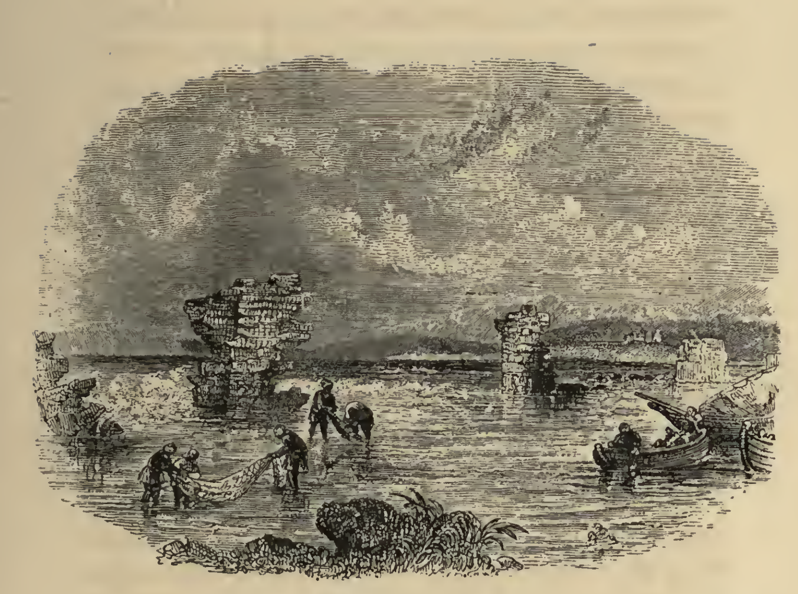
In the time of Solomon, Hiram was king of Tyre, and to him the former sent for cedar trees out of Lebanon, and for workmen to hew them and fit them for their place in the temple. "There is none among us," he said, "that can skill to hew timber like the Sidonians." Virgil, in referring to Carthage, for a long time the rival of Rome, mentions its having

* Rawlinson's Herodotus, ii., 71.

been colonized from Tyre, and yet speaks of it as a Sidonian city.

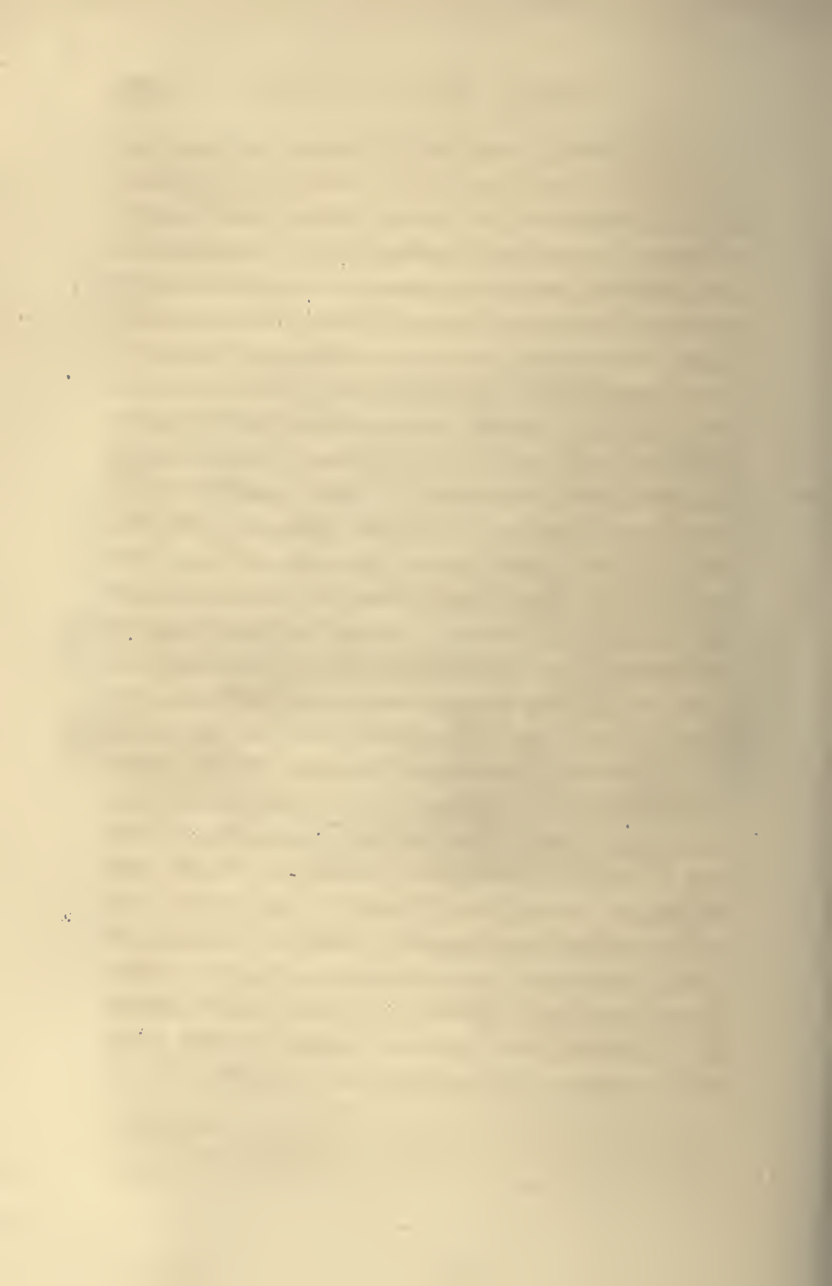
The eminence of Tyre in civilization and art is well attested by the reputation it acquired, as well as by remains of its ancient grandeur. David was indebted in the construction of his palace, as Solomon was afterwards in the construction of the temple, to skilled labor from Tyre. It combined with the wealth of an extensive commerce high attainments in art. Its workmen were adepts in the preparation of brass and copper. For several centuries the relations between the kings of Tyre and Judah were friendly, if not intimate; but at length commercial cupidity led the people of Tyre to the purchase of Hebrew captives, and the sale of them to the Greeks and Edomites as slaves. In other respects, no doubt, its wickedness had also become aggravated, and hence the denunciations which the Hebrew pro phets were directed by God to utter against it.

These denunciations were first pronounced at the very time when Tyre had reached the culminating point of its prosperity. But already Assyria was extending her vast empire. In Isaiah's day (741 B. C.) the ten tribes were subdued by this rising power of the East, and great numbers of them were carried away captive. Nothing now intervened between Assyria and Tyre, and the ambitious monarch of Nineveh would scarce fail to grasp at the thriving cities on the coast of the Mediterranean, to add them to his domain. Seizing the occasion when Tyre was engaged in suppressing a revolt in the



Ruins of the Port of Tyre.

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island of Cyprus, he invaded Phenicia ; but although he met with some success, and captured some of the cities of the coast, he failed in his main object. Withdrawing the greater portion of his army, Shalmaneser left enough to guard the fountains upon which the city was largely dependent for water, and which the traveler notes to-day with astonishment. For five years the citizens were denied access to their fountains and aqueducts, and forced to depend on the wells of the city itself. But Tyre remained unsubdued, and continued for many years an independent state under her native princes. The city was immensely wealthy and strongly fortified. Instead of her own citizens, she had mercenary soldiers to fill her armies. Phenicians from Arvad, Ethiopians from Egypt, and hardy mountaineers from Persia were employed in her service. Her trade was vast and extensive. She obtained gold from Arabia, by the way of the Persian Gulf; silver, iron, lead and tin from Tarshish, or Tartessus, in the south of Spain, which she had colonized; copper from Cyprus, or the regions south of the Black Sea; wheat and grain from Palestine; oil, honey and balm from the same quarter; wines from Damascus; lambs, rams and goats from the Arabian tribes; linen from Egypt; shell-fish for the famous Tyrian dye from the Peloponnesus, and ivory and ebony from Dedan, in the Persian Gulf.*

* The prophet's magnificent figure of Tyre as a "sta ely ship" (Ezek. xxvii.), its boards and timbers of fir-tree; its masts and cedars from Lebanon; its oars oaks of Bashan; its benches of

It is in the midst of the graphic picture of the prosperity of Tyre, vividly sketched by Ezekiel (xxvii)—while he can speak of the ships of Tarshish singing of her in the markets, and can dwell upon "thy riches and thy fairs, thy merchandise, thy mariners and thy pilots, thy caulkers and the occupiers of thy merchandise, and all thy men of war"—that he draws the lines of her final doom. But even in his denunciation he portrays a splendor and pomp, as well as pride, that seem truly oriental. (Ezek. xxviii.): "Thus saith the Lord God, Because thine heart is lifted up, and thou hast said, I am a God; I sit in the seat of God, in the midst of the seas: yet thou art a man, and not God, though thou set thine heart as the heart of God. . . . With thy wisdom and thine understanding thou hast gotten thee riches, and hast gotten gold and silver into thy treasures. By thy great wisdom and by thy traffic hast thou increased thy treasures, and thine heart is lifted up because of thy riches. . . . Thou hast been an Eden in the garden of God: every precious stone was thy covering, the sardius, topaz and the diamond, the beryl, the onyx and the jasper, the sapphire, the emerald and the carbuncle, and gold."

It was while Tyre enjoyed this remarkable prosperity that Nebuchadnezzar, at the head of his army, invaded Judea and captured Jerusalem. Tyre

ivory; its sails of fine linen from Egypt, &c., is finely presented by Prof. Tyler in the *Hours at Home* for April, 1867. The whole passage is well worthy of perusal in this connection.

exulted in this humiliation of a foe that, under the reforming Josiah, only a few years before, had burned her idols. But her turn was soon to come. The conqueror directed his course northward to Phenicia, and for thirteen years conducted the siege of Tyre, till, in the expressive language of Ezekiel, "every head was made bald, and every shoulder was peeled." Yet we have no record of the capture of the city, and indeed, from the fact that it is stated "yet had he no wages, nor his army, for Tyrus, for the service that he had served against it," as well as from the promise that he should have Egypt as his reward, we might perhaps infer that the merchant city successfully resisted the assaults of the great conqueror.*

There may, however, have been a qualified submission, and the city was doubtless weakened, or at

* Prideaux represents Nebuchadnezzar as victorious over old Tyre, which he captured and utterly demolished. But during the siege the inhabitants removed most of their effects to the island, then half a mile distant from the shore, and there built the new city. The picture of the siege given by Ezekiel (xxvi. 8) would apply to the former, but not to the latter, while Josephus, from Phenician histories, relates that the succession of the kings was not interrupted. He adds that "it is most probable that after Nebuchadnezzar had taken and destroyed the old town, those who had retired into the island came to terms, and submitted to him, and that thereon Baal was deputed to be their king under him, and reigned ten years." After this, to make Tyre more dependent, the form of government was changed, and judges were deputed to rule, instead of kings.—*Prideaux's Connections*, I., 91. It may be remarked that the view that the island was first built upon during the siege of old Tyre does not seem well founded. See Isaiah xxiii. 2.

least greatly impoverished, by the protracted siege. Friendly relations subsisted subsequently between Tyre and Babylon, and when the latter fell under Persian dominion, Tyre also submitted, without striking a blow. Yet her citizens were no slavish subjects, and utterly refused to join Cambyses in his expedition against Carthage, originally a Tyrian colony. They united with Persia, however, in her invasion of Greece, and contributed vessels to the great fleet of Xerxes. Soon after this the city was visited by Herodotus, who merely notices, however, its famed temple of Hercules, with its two columns, one of gold and the other of emerald.

One hundred and twenty years later, another European approached the city. It was the great conqueror, Alexander, at the head of his army. It was essential to the success of his plans to have control of the Phenician fleet, and he summoned all the Phenician cities to submit to his rule. Tyre alone refused to admit him within her walls. The new city, no longer on the main land, but on the island facing the ancient site, felt confident, in her isolated fortress, of being able safely to defy the Macedonian invader. For seven months the siege was continued. Alexander built a solid causeway from the main land to the island, by this means changing it into a peninsula; and thus at last captured the city, and humbled the proud mistress of the seas.

The results of the capture of the city were most disastrous. Its brave defenders were put to death

with revengeful and barbarous cruelty. Thirty thousand of its inhabitants, including women and children, were sold as slaves. It gradually recovered from this calamitous blow, but it found a commercial rival in the new city of Alexandria. Under the Seleucidæ, however, it obtained some favorable concessions, and coins of that age, with a Phenician and Greek inscription, still exist. Under the Roman dominion, Tyre enjoyed a moderate freedom, and her immunities as one of those that had been "free cities from their ancestors," were treated with respect until a pretext for invading them was afforded by her seditions. Even under Augustus the prosperity of Tyre was still great. Strabo speaks of its wealth and its palace-like dwellings, several stories high, the limited area of the peninsula forcing its inhabitants to make the best use of their narrow space.

As Christianity extended a church was gathered at Tyre, and a magnificent edifice was erected for Christian worship. In the third and fourth centuries it must have been still a large and populous city. Jerome, celebrated as the author of the Vulgate translation of the Bible, visited Tyre about the year A. D. 385. In his commentaries on the prophets he refers to the verse in which it is predicted of Tyre, "Thou shalt be built no more," saying that this raises a question as to how a city can be said not to be built any more, which we see at the present day the most noble and most beautiful city of Phenicia. He testifies that in his day Tyre had an

almost world-wide commerce ; so that nearly a thousand years after Isaiah had prophesied, his predictions were only in part fulfilled.

But the Mohammedan conquest was at hand, and the new faith, propagated by fire and sword, was commended to the Tyrians. The conditions on which they were, however, spared, were humiliating ; and their commerce, though not annihilated, must have experienced a serious decline. Yet in the time of the Crusades, four or five centuries later, Tyre was still a flourishing city. It had been in early times the seat of a Christian bishop, and it passed back into the hands of the Christians in A. D. 1124, and now became an archiepiscopal see. Its occupant, who has left a record of the condition of the city, testified to its wealth and its military strength. Benjamin of Tudela, in A. D. 1173, says : "Nor do I think any haven in the world to be like unto this. The city itself is goodly. . . . There are artificial workmen in glass there, who make glass called Tyrian glass, the most excellent and of the greatest estimation in all countries." He speaks also of a Jewish University there, and of wealthy Jews, "who had ships at sea for the sake of gain."

For about a century and a half Tyre remained under the power of the Christians ; but in A. D. 1291 it fell into the hands of the sultan of Egypt and Damascus. The Tyrians, almost in a body, "without the stroke of a sword or the tumult of war," deserted the city, embarking on board the vessels in the harbor, and leaving the foe to enter without resist-

ance. From this time its fate was sealed, it steadily declined till it became what it was when Volney visited it. It had existed and flourished to a greater or less extent for nearly three thousand years; it had planted colonies that had grown to nations and acted a prominent part in the history of the world; it had been the seat of commerce and the home of wealth and art; its fame had gone abroad to all lands; its armies had defied the forces, and its strongholds repelled the assaults, of the mightiest conquerors. Nebuchadnezzar and Alexander had good reason to remember the obstinate resistance it made to their efforts. When Rome was in its cradle, Tyre was to that age what England was to the world when Nelson led her fleets on the ocean; and long after the barbarians had ravaged Rome, and the sceptre of the Western Empire had passed into strange hands, Tyre was still a flourishing city.

But the word of prophecy was to be fulfilled, and what is Tyre to-day? In 1610–11 the traveler Sandys spoke of it as "a heap of ruins," instructing "the pensive beholder with their exemplary frailty." In 1697 Maundrell said of it: "It has an old Turkish castle, besides which there is nothing here but a mere Babel of broken walls, pillars, vaults, &c., there being not so much as an entire house left. Its present inhabitants are only a few poor wretches, that harbor in vaults and subsist upon fishing." Pococke, in 1737–40, remarks that, excepting janizaries, the city had two or three Christian families and a few other inhabitants. Hasselquist,

in 1751, said that Tyre, though once queen of the sea, could scarcely be called a miserable village. "Here are about ten inhabitants, Turks and Christians, who live by fishing." We have already seen the testimony of Volney and later travelers, who speak of its population as increased to some few thousands, describing the ruins of its once famous harbor in such a manner to show that it is impossible that it should ever recover its lost position. One of the latest visitors who has described the ruins of this ancient city is J. L. Porter, who says: "Tyre is now represented by a poor village. The ancient 'mistress of the seas' can only boast of a few fishing boats. The modern houses of a better class have had their walls so shattered by earthquakes that the inhabitants have deserted them. . . . But one thing especially struck me in wandering over the site of Tyre. Along the shores of the peninsula lie huge sea-beaten fragments of the old wall, and piles of granite and marble columns. They are bare as the top of a rock, and here and there I saw fishermen spreading out their nets upon them to dry in the bright sunshine. When I saw them, I sat down on one of the highest fragments, and read, with mingled feelings of wonder and awe, the words of Ezekiel: 'I will make thee like the top of a rock: thou shalt be a place to spread nets upon.'"

Still another traveler, Thomson (The Land and the Book), who corrects some of the descriptions of Dr. Robinson, speaks of the number of "granite columns that lie in the sea, particularly on the north

of the island," as "surprising." He speaks of the "one solitary specimen of Tyre's great sea wall" at the extreme northern end of the island, in which is to be seen "a stone nearly seventeen feet long and six and a half thick, which rests just where Tyrian architects placed it thousands of years ago." The entire southern half of the island is now given up to cultivation, pasturage and the general cemetery of the town; yet far below the surface are found "the remains of those splendid edifices for which Tyre was celebrated." A few years since the quarriers for the government barracks at Beirut discovered here, some fifteen feet below the surface, "a beautiful marble pavement, among a confused mass of columns of every size and variety of rock." The bases of some were still in their original positions—parts of what was once a superb temple. In an adjoining quarry was found a marble statue of a female figure, admirably preserved. Thus "the unconscious tourist now walks heedlessly over wrecks of ancient splendor which astonished and delighted even the well-traveled 'father of history,' four centuries before the birth of Christ."

Before proceeding to consider the specific fulfillment of prophecy with respect to Tyre, let us note the description given of her grandeur and pride and the sources of her wealth, and see how accordant they are with the facts of history. Isaiah (xxiii. 3) addresses her as "thou whom the merchants of Zidon, that pass over the sea, have replenished." (4), "The harvest of the river is her revenue, and

she is a mart of nations." He speaks of her as the "joyous city, whose antiquity is of ancient days," thus recalling the boast made by her priests to Herodotus. And again he denominates her (8) "the crowning city, whose merchants are princes, whose traffickers are the honorable of the earth." Ezekiel (xxvi. 17) speaks of her as "inhabited of seafaring men, the renowned city, which wast strong in the sea." He addresses her (xxvii. 3–6): "O thou that art situate at the entrance of the sea, which art a merchant of the people for many isles. . . . Thou hast said, I am of perfect beauty. Thy borders are in the midst of the seas, thy builders have perfected thy beauty. They have made all thy shipboards of fir trees of Senir; they have taken cedars from Lebanon to make masts for thee. Of the oaks of Bashan have they made thine oars; the company of the Ashurites have made thy benches of ivory brought out of the isles of Chittim," &c. In this strain we have catalogued, one by one, the lands and nations which contributed to the greatness of Tyre, so that it is said, "when thy wares went forth out of the seas, thou filledst many people; thou didst enrich the kings of the earth with the multitude of thy riches and thy merchandise."

The guilt of Tyre is mentioned along with her prosperity. (Ezek. xxvii. 17, 18): "Thine heart was lifted up because of thy beauty; thou hast corrupted thy wisdom by reason of thy brightness. Thou hast defiled thy sanctuaries by the multitude of thine iniquities, by the iniquity of thy traffic."

What this was is more fully noted by Joel (iii. 3–8): "They have cast lots for my people, and have given a boy for an harlot, and sold a girl for wine, that they might drink. . . . Ye have taken my silver and my gold, and have carried into your temples my goodly pleasant things. The children also of Judah, and the children of Jerusalem, have ye sold unto the Grecians, that ye might remove them far from their border." Thus by the iniquity of the slave-trade the measure of the guilt of Tyre was to be made full. She trafficked not only in the merchandise of ordinary commerce, but in that of Jewish captives. We are struck by this graphic picture of the greatness and the crime of that ancient city which was "a mart of nations." We feel, as we gaze upon it, that it must have been drawn by the hands of those who were familiar with what they described.

Turning now to Isaiah (xxiii.), we find the future doom of the city foretold. If not captured, it was at least to be humiliated by the invasion of Nebuchadnezzar, to whom, whether captured or not, it finally submitted. "Is this your joyous city? . . . Her own feet shall carry her far off to sojourn. . . . The Lord of hosts hath purposed it, to stain the pride of all glory. . . . The Lord hath given a commandment against the merchant city, to destroy the strongholds thereof. . . . Thou shalt no more rejoice: . . . arise, pass over to Chittim: there also shalt thou have no rest. . . . Howl, ye ships of Tarshish, for your strength is laid waste." The

thirteen years' siege of the city must largely have interfered with its traffic. The old city on the main land, at least, was leveled, and possibly portions of the new. Jerome, although an uncertain authority, says that during the siege the inhabitants, apprehensive of the result, sailed away with their wealth, and when Nebuchadnezzar took the city there was nothing of any account left him as plunder; and on this ground he was promised Egypt as his reward. If this be so, we see the meaning of the words, "her own feet shall carry her afar off to sojourn," and of the counsel, "arise, pass over to Chittim," while the ships of Tarshish, or Tartessus, would "howl," inasmuch as they could no longer obtain the wares which were brought to Tyre from the East.

That Nebuchadnezzar should obtain in some way possession of Tyre was foretold by Jeremiah (xxvii. 3–7). It was expressly included in the list of lands of which it was said they "shall serve him, and his son, and his son's son, until the very time of his land come." On this point Isaiah is still more express (xxiii. 15): "Tyre shall be forgotten seventy years." For this period Tyre remained subject to Babylon and Persia, and we hear no more of it till we come to the history of Persian invasions, in which Tyre took part with her ships. The prophet Ezekiel (xxvi. 3) speaks of "the many nations" that should come against Tyre. This was fulfilled in the strange nationalities that composed the army of Nebuchadnezzar. They should come up "as the sea causeth his waves to come up." Who does not see the force

as well as the truthful vividness of the picture? He should come (7), "a king of kings from the north, with horses and chariots, and with horsemen, and companies, and much people." He should (8) slay with the sword the daughters of Tyre in the field (or on the main land, within the bounds of the old city), and he should make a fort against her, and lift up the buckler against her; (9), and set engines of war against the walls, and with his axes break down her towers. (10), By reason of the abundance of his horses, the dust should cover the city, the walls should shake at the noise of the horsemen, and of the wheels, and of the chariots, when he should enter her gates. (11), With the hoofs of his horses he should tread down all her streets, slaying the people, subduing the garrisons and (12) spoiling her riches, breaking down her walls, destroying her pleasant houses, and laying her stones and her timber in the midst of the water. It is manifest that these predictions were substantially fulfilled during the siege of Tyre by Nebuchadnezzar; but "the laying of her stones and her timber in the midst of the water" seems to point to the measures afterward adopted by Alexander to reach the walls of the new city on the island.

Again, Ezekiel (xxvii. 34) says: "Thy merchandise and all the company in the midst of thee shall fall." (xxvi. 13), "I will cause the noise of thy songs to cease, and the sound of thy harp shall be no more heard." This would be the natural, if not the necessary result both of the siege by Nebuchad-

nezzar and of the voluntary exile by the citizens of Tyre. The city would be long in recovering from the blow.

Yet it was to recover after a period of seventy years. (Isaiah xxiii. 17), "It shall come to pass, after the end of seventy years, that the Lord will visit Tyre, and she shall turn to her hire, and shall commit fornication with all the kingdoms of the world upon the face of the earth." She did recover from her fall, and her fleets again covered the sea. She aided the Persian king in his invasion of Greece, and thus challenged the fate which she experienced at the hands of Alexander. He took the city after a siege of seven months, using the rubbish of the old city, torn down by Nebuchadnezzar in his siege, to build the causeway by which new Tyre became a peninsula instead of an island, and was thus rendered accessible to the forces of the great conqueror.

But there was yet a most singular prediction (Is. xxiii. 18) to be fulfilled: "Her merchandise and her hire shall be holiness to the Lord; it shall not be treasured nor laid up; for her merchandise shall be for them that dwell before the Lord, to eat sufficiently, and for durable clothing." In other words, Tyre, unlike Babylon or Nineveh, was to become a Christian city. We may well believe that it was visited by our Lord, so near was it to the principal scene of his public ministry. We have the record of His being visited by a Syro-phenician woman, and it seems as though its inhabitants must already have given some evidence of that disposition which led

Him to say that if Tyre and Sidon had enjoyed the privileges of some of the favored cities of Galilee, they would long ago have repented. This at least is certain, that Christianity not only gained a foothold in Tyre, but attained to a commanding position. One of the most imposing church edifices of the East was erected within the city walls, and for some centuries, perhaps till the tide of Mohammedan invasion swept over it, a Christian church flourished in that "mart of nations."

But, in spite of this extended prosperity, it was to become "desolate" and "a ruin." (Amos i. 10): "I will send a fire on the wall of Tyrus which shall devour the palaces thereof." (Zech. ix. 3, 4): "Tyrus did build herself a stronghold, and heaped up silver as the dust, and fine gold as the mire of the streets. Behold the Lord will cast her out, and he will smite her power in the sea, and she shall be devoured with fire." It is the record of history that, after the capture of the city by Alexander, he ordered it to be set on fire, and it is doubtless to this fact that the completeness of her ruin was largely due.

"I shall make thee a desolate city, like the cities that are not inhabited," says the Lord by Ezekiel (xxvi. 19). Traveler after traveler has detailed the fulfillment of the words. "I shall bring thee down with them that descend into the pit. (20, 21): "I will make thee a terror, and thou shalt be no more. Though thou be sought for, yet thou shalt never be found again." Such as she was, she *is* no more to be found. She has gone down into the pit. "I

continued my walk," says Dr. Robinson, "along the whole western and northern shore of the peninsula, musing upon the pomp and glory, the pride and fall, of ancient Tyre. Here was the little isle, once covered by her palaces and surrounded by her fleets." But the prophet had said (Ezek. xxvi. 19): "I shall bring up the deep upon thee, and great waters shall cover thee." Dr. Robinson says the western "shore is strewed from one end to the other, along the edge of the water, and in the water, with columns of red and gray granite of various sizes, the only remaining monuments of the splendor of ancient Tyre. At the north-west point of the island forty or fifty such columns are thrown together in one heap beneath the waves. There are also occasional columns along the northern shore." Dr. Robinson found the abutments of the old wall of the port at its western extremity, resting on marble columns laid beneath.

Again, Ezekiel (xxvi. 4) says: "They shall destroy the walls of Tyrus, and break down her towers." This work has been most effectually done. "I will also scrape her dust from her, and make her like the top of a rock." Dr. Robinson says: "The western coast of the island is wholly a ledge of ragged, picturesque rocks, in some parts fifteen or twenty feet high, upon which the waves of the Mediterranean dash with ceaseless surges." But the prophet proceeds (14): "I will make thee like the top of a rock; thou shalt be a place to spread nets upon." Several travelers have noted the fulfillment

of this prediction. "The part," says Dr. Robinson, "which projects on the south beyond the isthmus is perhaps a quarter of a mile broad, and is rocky and uneven; it is now unoccupied, except as 'a place to spread nets upon.'" And it is added (14), "Thou shalt be built no more, for I, the Lord, have spoken it." Repeated attempts have not succeeded in re-



MODERN TYRE.

versing the sentence. In the first half of the seventeenth century Fakhr-ed-Din, the celebrated chief of the Druses, endeavored to restore the importance of the city, but without success. "The sole remaining tokens of her more ancient splendor," says Dr. Robinson, "lie strewed beneath the waves in the midst of the sea; and the hovels which now nestle upon a portion of her site present no contradiction to

the dread decree, 'Thou shalt be built no more.'' As to its prospects for the future, we may judge from the rapid filling up, even in recent times, of its port, upon which its commercial importance depends. Dr. Robinson states that he was informed by his host that, within his own recollection, the water covered the open place before his house, which at present is ten or twelve rods from the sea and surrounded with buildings; while older men remember that vessels formerly anchored where the shore now is. The remains of its port, injured previously by earthquakes, doubtless, are fast disappearing through the deposit of sand from the waves.

There are several other points in regard to which the language of the prophets has been strikingly fulfilled; and doubtless, if we were more familiar with the history of Tyre, we might find light thrown on some expressions which are now obscure. For instance, there can be little doubt that as Tyre had sold Jewish captives, so her own citizens were sold, *both* by Nebuchadnezzar and Alexander—for the latter is said to have sold thirty thousand into slavery—and thus she was ''recompensed." The measure she had meted to others was measured to her again. But what most arrests our attention is the slow but progressive infliction of the threatened doom. Centuries roll away before the measure of her desolation is full; yet judgment overtakes her at last. Two thousand years of almost continuous prosperity end in a desolation which is pitiable indeed.

The contrast of Tyre with Sidon, as drawn by an

eye-witness* of the ruins of both cities, fitly closes this review of their prophetic doom: "The aspect of Tyre is bleak and bare, but that of Sidon rich and blooming. . . . The gardens and orchards of Sidon are charming. Oranges, lemons, citrons, bananas and palms grow luxuriantly, and give the environs of the old city a look of eternal spring. . . . It is instructive to compare Tyre and Sidon. The former outstripped the latter in grandeur, wealth and power, but its history has been briefer and more momentous. Once and again the tide of war swept over Tyre, first leaving the *old* city desolate and then the *new* in ruins. Sidon has been more fortunate. . . . How are we to account for this marked difference in the history of two cities, founded by the same race, standing upon the same shore, almost within sight of each other, inhabited by the same people, and exposed to the same dangers? Human foresight, had it been asked, would have pronounced Tyre the most secure, because its position rendered it almost impregnable. The spirit of prophecy judged it otherwise. And in answering this question the thoughtful reader of the Bible and the thoughtful student of history will not overlook the fact that, while Sidon's name is lightly passed over by the Hebrew prophets, the curses pronounced upon Tyre are among the most sweeping and terrible in the whole scope of prophecy."

* Rev. J. L. Porter.



SIDON.

AN ancient tradition of Greece traces the origin of the literature and learning of that nation to a Phenician emigrant. Cadmus is said to have brought with him, from the eastern shores of the Mediterranean, to his new home sixteen letters of the alphabet—the germ from which was developed the eloquence and philosophy of the most brilliant nation of the ancient world.

If we are not able to confirm the tradition, we are not warranted in utterly rejecting it. Greece was a land of barbarous customs and savage tribes when Sidon, the ancient capital of Phenicia, had risen to high rank as a civilized and powerful state. If the Greek wished to express his high estimate of the finish and perfection of any work of art, he had simply to declare it worthy of Sidonian skill. There was doubtless a basis of historical truth in Homer's representation of Achilles, at the games in honor of Patroclus, bestowing, as the prize of the swiftest runner, a large silver bowl which had been cunningly wrought by the skillful Sidonians. So the most beautiful and valuable gift which Menelaus

could bestow upon Telemachus was a golden-rimmed bowl of silver, which the former had received from a Sidonian king.

Tyre became the mart of nations, a great commercial centre; but the Sidonians are noted merely for their attainments in art. Their earlier eminence was eclipsed by the remarkable prosperity of the more youthful city, which planted her colonies on distant shores and attracted to her harbor the traffic of nations. Yet Tyre was itself, if we can accept the ancient tradition, a colony of Sidon, planted on the capture of the latter city by the king of Ashkelon, the year before the overthrow of ancient Troy, and the Tyrians are spoken of in history as Sidonians.

Sidon, at least we have every reason to believe, was already an ancient city before the foundations of Tyre were laid. The two places were only about twenty miles apart—Sidon, the most northerly, being not far from one hundred and twenty distant from Jerusalem. Neighbors in location and kindred in speech, their diverse interests may naturally have made them forgetful of their common origin, and the pride of Tyre may have disdained to acknowledge the relationship. Yet Sidon is famous long before the name of Tyre is even mentioned. It may have been founded by, and it doubtless derived its name from Zidon, the first-born of Canaan; and at a very early period we meet with repeated mention of the Sidonians in the Bible. From the hill country of Lebanon they were to be driven out (Josh. xiii. 6) by the Israelites. Yet their city is still spoken of

(Josh. xix. 28) as "great Zidon." They were left in the land (Jud. iii. 1) to "prove Israel."

Before the days of Solomon, it is altogether probable that Tyre had become the most important city, and that the Sidonians (1 Kings v. 6) were subject to the power of Hiram, king of Tyre. Yet subsequently we find Solomon going "after Ashtoreth, the goddess of the Zidonians," while Jezebel, the wife of Ahab, is the daughter of a Sidonian king. If the two cities were for a time subject to the same monarch, they must, after no long interval, have sustained the relations of independent or at least of allied states.

Both Tyre and Sidon seem to have shared the same crime of selling Hebrew captives as slaves. Tyre, however, was probably foremost in guilt, and was threatened more largely and with sorer judgments. A rivalry between the two cities led Sidon to adopt a foreign policy opposed to that of Tyre, and in the wars of successive ages they are found repeatedly ranged in an attitude of mutual hostility.

Sidon probably attained its highest prosperity under Persian dominion. This was more than a century after Ezekiel's predictions against it were uttered. At this time it furnished an important contingent to the Persian army under Xerxes. Herodotus speaks in praise of the elegance of its vessels. Revolting against Persia, its people were betrayed by their own ruler, who placed one hundred of its most distinguished citizens in the hands of the Persian monarch. These were shot to death

with javelins, and five hundred others, who went forth in behalf of the city to sue for favor, experienced the same fate. Meanwhile the Sidonians had burned their ships, to prevent any attempt on the part of the citizens to abandon the place; so that when the Persian troops were treacherously admitted within the gates, they saw themselves reduced to desperation. Shutting themselves up, therefore, with their families in their dwellings, they resolved to fulfill their purpose of perishing with their city. Each one set fire to his own house, and forty thousand persons are said to have perished in the flames.

From this desolating blow the city, colonized, doubtless, from abroad, gradually recovered; and when Tyre chose to resist Alexander, Sidon joined him with her fleet. Her hatred of the Persian made her welcome his assailant. From this time the city enjoyed for a long period a moderate prosperity; and, a few years before the Christian era, Strabo, speaking of Tyre and Sidon, remarked, "both were illustrious and splendid, formerly and now;" adding hat it was a matter of dispute which of them was the capital of Phenicia. In his day the city was situated "on the main land, on a fine, naturally-formed harbor." The sciences of arithmetic and astronomy, as well as the study of philosophy, were cultivated there, and Pliny notes its manufacture of glass.

For the succeeding centuries, till A. D. 1291, it seems to have shared the fortunes of Tyre, captured and recaptured by Christians and Mohammedans

It never sank, however, to so low a condition. In the seventeenth and the early part of the eighteenth century, by a revival of trade, it became the principal city on the Syrian coast, and at one time its population was estimated at twenty thousand. Since that time it has decreased, not amounting at the present time to over seven thousand. The signs of former wealth, however, still remain. Many of its houses are built of stone. But its harbor is ruined. By the orders of Fahkr-ed-Din it was filled up with earth and stone as a protection against the Turks, and only small boats can now enter it. The larger vessels are imperfectly protected from the winds, and Beirut has proved the fortunate and more successful rival of Sidon.*

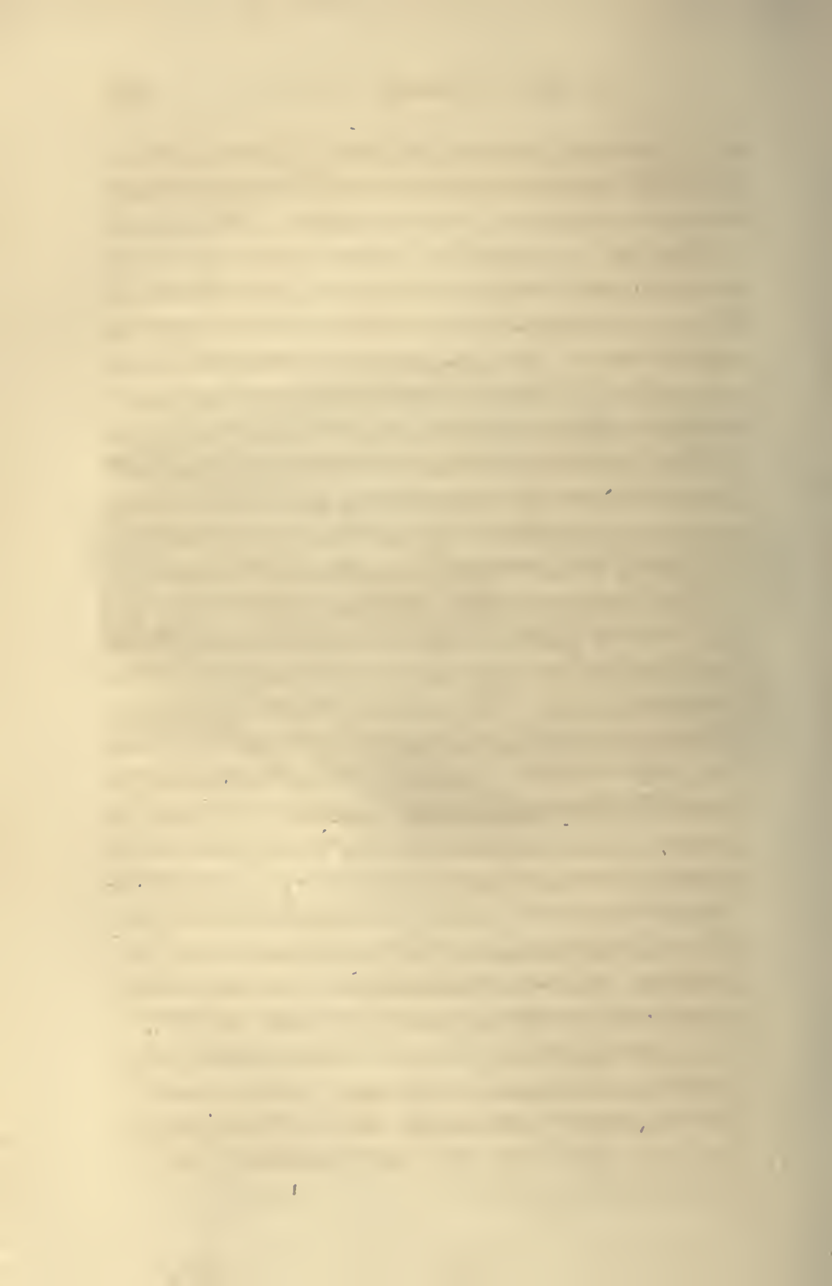
The city itself lies on the northwest slope of a

* Thomson ("The Land and the Book") says of Sidon: "Even Joshua ventured not to attack her; and the flying nations found a safe asylum from his devouring sword within her gates. Her merchant ships sailed over every sea. She built strong cities along the shore—Beirut. and Gebal, and Arvad, and Accles, and Dor, and many more. She planted colonies in Cyprus and the Grecian Isles, in Lybia and in Spain, while by her side she nourished her fair daughter, Tyre. Then began her long and sad decline. The streams of her prosperity were dried up or diverted. The proud Pharaohs from the Nile—the stern Assyrian from distant Nineveh—the cruel Chaldeans and Persians from Babylon —the rough he-goat from Grecia, and the king of fierce countenance from the Tiber, all helped to lay poor Sidon in the dust. And long after, those locusts which came out of the bottomless pit, with Apollyon at their head, completed the work, during those dismal days when men sought death, but could not find it. And yet Sidon still exists, and has always clung to life with a strange tenacity. Her history runs parallel with the march of time, down the ceaseless current of human generations. Not so Tyre.'



ANCIENT PORT OF SIDON AS AT PRESENT.

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small promontory that projects obliquely into the sea. On the south is the citadel, a large square tower of the times of the Crusaders. On the land side the city is inclosed by a wall which runs across the promontory from sea to sea. The streets are narrow, crooked and dirty, while some of the houses, unlike those of Tyre, are distinguished for their size and height, and some of them, built upon the eastern wall, and forming, in fact, a part of it, enjoy pure air and a pleasing prospect. Silk, cotton and nut-galls constitute the principal exports. The inhabitants are two-thirds Mohammedans, while the rest are mainly Jews, Greek Catholics and Maronites.

"The beauty of Saida consists," says Dr. Robinson, "in its gardens and orchards of fruit trees, which fill the plain and extend to the foot of the mountains. The city and the tract around are abundantly supplied with water by aqueducts and channels," which conduct it from the mountain streams. The surrounding region is clothed in luxuriant verdure, and the varied fruits of the country are highly esteemed.

Some important remains of antiquity have been discovered at the base of the mountains to the east of Sidon. Numerous sepulchres have been hewn in the rocks, and sepulchral caves are met with in the adjoining plain. In one of these, a few years since, a sarcophagus, in Egyptian style and exquisitely wrought, was found, and the Phenician inscriptions upon it are the most extended that have come down to our times.

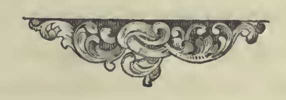
In turning to the prophecies against Sidon we find none that indicate a desolation like that which was to overtake Babylon, Nineveh, Petra, or even Tyre. With the latter she was to share the recompense due on account of her traffic in Hebrew captives (Joel iii. 4); and we cannot doubt that, amid the vicissitudes of her history and under Persian dominion, this prediction was fulfilled. Nothing would be more natural than that the conqueror should seek to crush the spirit of rebellion by meting to her the doom which she had inflicted on the vanquished Jews. Isaiah (xxiii. 2, 4, 12) spoke of her merchants "that pass over the sea" as replenishing the isles, and adds: "Be thou ashamed, O Zidon;" and again: "Thou shalt no more rejoice, O thou oppressed virgin daughter of Zidon: arise, pass over to Chittim; there also shalt thou have no rest." Jeremiah (xxvii. 6) speaks of Sidon as one of the regions which were to be brought under the control of Nebuchadnezzar, and to form a part of his conquests. We know that this proved to be the case within a very short period after the prophecy was uttered.

Ezekiel (xxviii. 22, 23) is more minute. His language is: "Thus saith the Lord God, Behold I am against thee, O Zidon; and I will be glorified in the midst of thee, and they shall know that I am the Lord, when I shall have executed judgments in her, and shall be sanctified in her. For I will send into her pestilence, and blood into her streets; and the wounded shall be judged in the midst of her by

the sword upon her on every side: and they shall know that I am the Lord." This was fulfilled in the vengeance inflicted upon Sidon by the Persians in consequence of her revolt.

Every one must be struck by the contrast between these predictions and those that concern most of the other ancient cities and empires. Sidon was to be visited by sword and pestilence, and her people were to some extent to be sold as captives, while the city, thrown between rival and conflicting empires, was to have no rest; and this has manifestly been the substance of her history. But after all these judgments God was to be glorified in the midst of her. Her inhabitants were to know the Lord, and He was to be sanctified in her.

We know many of the sore judgments that befell her, and we know also that at length the city became Christianized. Probably for successive centuries, till the Mohammedan invasion, it was the seat of a Christian church, and held high rank as such among the cities of the East. It is somewhat remarkable that no such minute judgments were denounced against Sidon as were uttered against her sister cities, and it is equally remarkable that in her prolonged prosperity she was also exceptional.





SAMARIA.

ON the northern border of the territory originally belonging to the tribe of Ephraim, some forty miles north from Jerusalem, is a broad, basin-shaped valley, encircled by high hills, and in the centre of this basin, several miles wide, rises a long, steep eminence, the summit of which is an extended level plain. This was the site chosen by Omri for the capital of the kingdom of Israel after the secession of the ten tribes. It was a site of remarkable beauty, and the traveler now is struck by the singular appropriateness of the term which the prophet Isaiah applied to it when he spoke of "the crown of pride," and declared (Isaiah xxviii. 3, 4) that "the glorious beauty which is on the head of the fat valley shall be a fading flower, and as the hasty fruit before the summer."

The view from the terraced summit, six hundred feet above the surrounding valleys, is indeed magnificent. The eye ranges over the rich plains and hills which encompass it, and gazes far away upon the blue waters of the Mediterranean. Even in Eastern lands it is rare to find a scene which for

picturesque beauty can be compared with it. The site of Israel's ancient capital is like a massive gem set in a casket of mountains. In former times fresh springs burst forth from the summit of the hill, which is less elevated than some of the surrounding heights, and their waters found their way in streams to the valley. It seemed as if the spot had been expressly designed, by all its natural advantages, for the princeliest and fairest of cities. The strength of its position, which might readily be improved by art, seemed to invest it with security, while, embosomed in a rich and fertile valley, it had at its command the resources of abundant food for a large population.

The city experienced, in the earlier centuries of its history, strange vicissitudes. Ahab built here the temple of Baal, and here the hundreds of Baal's priests were munificently supported and summarily executed. The city was twice besieged by the Syrians about nine hundred years before Christ, but resisted successfully all their efforts. It fell, however, 721 B. C., before the Assyrian conqueror, Shalmaneser, who virtually annihilated the kingdom by carrying off the people into captivity. By his successor, Esar-haddon, the district was repeopled; but it thenceforth disappears from history until the time of Alexander the Great. Before his conquest of it, it had recovered a portion of its former prosperity, but he visited it with terrible vengeance. A large portion of its inhabitants he put to death, suffering the others to remove to the neighboring city

of Shechem. In their place he planted a colony of Syro-Macedonians, who retained possession till the time of John Hyrcanus (who died 106 B. C.). Hyrcanus, resenting the injuries done to the people of Marissa, colonists and allies of the Jews, by the inhabitants of Samaria, besieged and took the city. The conqueror did his best to demolish it entirely. He is said to have intersected the hill with trenches, turning the streams from the fountains on the summit into them, with the design of undermining the foundations.

The city, in its ravaged state, was left in the hands of a small Jewish population till Pompey gave it back to the descendants of its original inhabitants. By the direction of Gabrinius it was, in common with other cities of the district, rebuilt. But it was reserved for Herod the Great, to whom it was granted by Augustus, to restore it to its lost magnificence. He lavished upon it the treasures of his wealth and taste. It was surrounded by a wall twenty stadia in length. In a central position he erected a magnificent temple, which he dedicated to Cesar. It was colonized by six thousand veteran soldiers, for whose support a fertile region, adjacent to the city, was appropriated. No pains were spared to make it beautiful and strong, the fitting capital for a great kingdom, and not unworthy of its ancient fame.

But these efforts were vain; the city was doomed. For several centuries it must have been a place of considerable importance, and it at length became the see of a Christian bishop. But it retained only for a limited period its rank as the leading city of the

division of Palestine to which it belonged. Cesarea succeeded to Samaria—or Sebaste, as it had been named by Herod—as the capital of the district; and thenceforth the "crown of pride" is indeed "a fading flower and the hasty fruit before the summer." During the Crusades it just emerges from its obscurity, and is rescued from the Moslems long enough to become the temporary seat of a Christian bishopric. Its site is now marked by a small village known as Sebustieh, but retaining few vestiges of its former grandeur.

Isaiah prophesied (viii. 4) that "the spoil of Samaria" should "be taken away before the king of Samaria." This was accomplished in the capture of the city—already mentioned—by Shalmaneser, 741 B. C. Jeremiah (xxiii. 13) declared the guilt and folly of the prophets of Samaria. "They prophesied in Baal, and caused my people Israel to err," thus indicating that under the new Assyrian colonists, with whom the remnant of the old inhabitants was commingled, the idolatry which had been established long before, and had been denounced by Elijah, was restored.* But this is almost the only reference made to Samaria by the later prophets. The Assyrian conquest had made it virtually a foreign and heathen city. Still it enjoyed for a long period a considerable degree of prosperity, and it might perhaps seem that the strength and beauty of its position would secure its continuance.

But two of the earlier prophets, Amos (810–785

* See also the history given 2 Kings xv... 24–41.

B. C.) and Micah (758–699), had long before proclaimed its guilt and its doom. The first of these (Amos iii. 9–15) had said: "Publish in the palaces of Ashdod and in the palaces in the land of Egypt, and say, Assemble yourselves upon the mountains of Samaria, and behold the great tumults in the midst thereof, and the oppressed (oppressions) in the midst thereof. For they knew not to do right, saith the Lord, who store up violence and robbery in their palaces. Therefore thus saith the Lord God, An adversary then shall be even round about the land: and he shall bring down thy strength from thee, and thy palaces shall be spoiled. . . . And I will smite the winter house with the summer house: and the houses of ivory shall perish, and the great houses shall have an end, saith the Lord."

The language of Micah is scarcely less explicit, and gives a picture of the final ruin of the city still more graphic. (Micah i. 5–9): "What is the transgression of Jacob? Is it not Samaria? . . . Therefore I will make Samaria as a heap in the field, and as plantings of a vineyard; and I will pour down the stones thereof into the valley, and I will discover the foundations thereof. And all the graven images thereof shall be beaten to pieces, and all the hires thereof shall be burned with fire, and all the idols thereof will I lay desolate; for she gathered it of the hire of a harlot, and they shall return to the hire of a harlot. . . . For her wound is incurable."

This is one of the few prophecies in which the

prediction may be conjectured to have contributed to its fulfillment. It must have been well known to John Hyrcanus, and it is not strange that after his capture of the city he should, by means of trenches, have so changed the water-courses from the summit as to "pour the stones thereof into the valley and discover the foundations thereof." He would also naturally be disposed to beat the graven images into pieces and burn their shrines, together with the offerings. It is true that the Assyrian conqueror may have wreaked his vengeance upon "the palaces," which would be given over to spoil, and that "the winter house," "the summer house," and "the houses of ivory" would probably be doomed to the same fate. But the zeal of a fanatic Jew would be even less disposed to spare the monuments of the greatness of a rival power, while it would exult in the destruction of every memorial of idol-worship. Urged by the exasperation of injuries offered to his allies, John Hyrcanus would mete out a summary vengeance upon the guilty city—a vengeance limited only by the resources at his command.

But if the prophecy was fulfilled in part by Shalmaneser, and more completely by John Hyrcanus, it would seem that under the patronage of Herod the Great the city might be restored to permanent prosperity. He lavished upon it the resources of his dominion, and under his direction it rose to a new grandeur, which perhaps almost vied with its former pride. Might it not yet become a great and splendid capital, worthy of its old

renown and its magnificent position? To this the language of the prophet Micah responds, "her wound is incurable." The wealth and taste of the most powerful kings could only secure Samaria a transient reprieve from her inevitable doom. For centuries she has been but the mere wreck of her former self. Thomson describes the place as "an insignificant village." The earliest of modern travelers make no mention of it, and Stanley speaks of its existence as having been brought fully to light only "within the last few years."* Yet he adds: "It is the only site in Palestine, besides Jerusalem, which exhibits relics of ancient architectural beauty. The long colonnade of the broken pillars of Herod's city still lines the topmost terrace of the hill; and the Gothic ruin of the church of St. John the Baptist,† parent of the numerous churches which bear his name throughout the West, remains over what Christians and the Musselman inhabitants still revere as the grave 'of the prophet John, son of Zacharias,' round which, in the days of Jerome, the same wild orgies were performed which are now to be seen round 'the Holy Sepulchre.' . . . There is no place of equal eminence in Palestine with so few great recollections. Compared with Shechem or Jerusalem, it is a mere growth of pleasure and convenience—the city of luxurious princes, not of patriarchs and prophets, priests and kings."

Thomson says: "The remains of the ancient city

* Sinai and Palestine, p. 242.

† Tradition reported Samaria as the place of his execution.

consist mainly of colonnades, which certainly date back to the time of the Herods, and perhaps many of the columns are much older. There is a group of sixteen, standing in a recess low down on the north-east side of the hill, and a similar group of sixteen on the top, though these last are larger; and there are many lying prostrate. The grand colonnade, however, runs along the south side of the hill, down a broad terrace, which descends rapidly toward the present village. The number of columns, whole or broken, along this line, is nearly *one hundred*, and many others lie scattered about on lower terraces. They are of various sizes, and quite irregularly arranged, but when perfect they must have formed a splendid colonnade. The entire hill is covered with rubbish, indicating the existence and repeated destruction of a large city."

As if to make the desolation of the ruins still more striking by contrast, the face of nature around wears the same imperishable charms which invested it in the times of the patriarchs and of the Israelitish kings. Bausman* describes the hill of Samaria as "cultivated to the top, and with thriving fig and olive trees on its belt and around its base." Even the fountains on the summit, although other travelers have denied the fact, arrested his attention, and he speaks of the streams that flow down from the northern edge of the summit to the plain. The view which the summit affords gives evidence of the

* Sinai and Zion, p. 384.

remarkable fertility of the basin of mountains in the midst of which Samaria stands. "Among the waving lakes of wheat-heads many Arabs were seen ploughing, sowing and weeding their grain. Many villages dotted the plain and mountains which border it, all green with rich pasturage. The fields, flocks, workmen, mountains, and villages all spread out to view like a charming variegated panorama."

Amid such scenes as these the ruins of Israel's ancient capital preach their impressive lesson. The glory of Samaria—all of it that could perish—all but its magnificent site and fertile soil—has departed long ago. "Grass and grain wave over its proud palaces, and the dust of her idolatrous inhabitants enriches the soil of her terraced hill. Fragments of her palaces are occasionally scraped up by the ploughman, and loose stones and ruins of her walls and dwellings are scattered around the base of the hill. Just as Micah has it, to the very letter: 'Therefore I will make Samaria as a heap of the field and as plantings of a vineyard: and I will pour down the stones thereof into the valley, and I will discover the foundations thereof.'"*

The single paragraph which Porter devotes to the city is equally significant:† "We halted at the western gate of Samaria, waiting for one or two stragglers, and to take a last look at the place. The gate is a shapeless heap of ruins, forming the termination of the well-known colonnade. I was

* Sinai and Zion, p. 364. † Syria's Holy Places.

never more deeply impressed with the minute accuracy of prophetic description, and the literal fulfillment of every detail, than when standing on that spot. Samaria occupied one of the finest sites in Palestine—a low, rounded hill in the centre of a rich valley, encircled by picturesque mountains. Temples and palaces once adorned it, famed throughout the East for the splendor of their architecture. But the destroyer has passed over it. I saw that long line of broken shafts, with the vines growing luxuriantly around their bases ; I saw a group of columns in the corn-field on the hill-top ; I saw hewn and sculptured blocks of marble and limestone in the rude walls of the terraced vineyards ; I saw great heaps of stones and rubbish among the olive groves in the bottom of the valley far below ; but I saw no other trace of the city founded by Omri and adorned by Herod. One would think the prophet Micah had seen that desolate site as I saw it, his description is so graphic : 'I will make Samaria as a heap of the field and as plantings of a vineyard ; and I will pour down the stones thereof into the valley, and I will discover the foundations thereof.'"

To this testimony of independent witnesses it would be superfluous to add comment. Samaria, within the last few years, has emerged from its former obscurity to become a new witness to the truth of Scripture prophecy. The curse of its idol-worship is written broadly on its ruins, and Samaria—by the marked judgments of Heaven, which have embosomed its decay amid scenes of imperish-

able magnificence and beauty, as if to make them more significant by the force of contrast—has become the monument at once of the inspiration of the Hebrew prophets and the inviolable justice of the God of Providence.





DAMASCUS.

DAMASCUS is perhaps the oldest city in the world. Its origin antedates authentic history. From time immemorial it has been a great city. According to Josephus, it was founded by Uz, the son of Aram* and grandson of Shem. In the days of Abraham, whose servant was from Damascus, the city was already flourishing, and from that day to this it has held a prominent place among the capitals of Western Asia. Its fortune has been various. It has passed from hand to hand, and been subjected to successive masters. Syrians, Persians, Greeks, Romans, Arabs and Turks have conquered and ruled it, but under each dynasty it has still flourished. It has been oppressed; it has been ravaged; it has been desolated by war and by fire; yet it has again and again risen from its desolation or its ashes, and numbers to-day a population not far short of two hundred thousand.

The situation of the city, in the midst of a fertile

* Aram is the Hebrew name for the region north-east of Palestine, which is rendered Syria in our English Bible.

plain from twenty-five to thirty miles in diameter, justifies the epithet applied to it by its own poets—"the Pearl of the East." The view of it from the brow of Lebanon is magnificent, unequaled in Syria, and perhaps unsurpassed in the world. As the traveler approaches it from the west, and gazes down upon it from the eastern slopes of Anti-Libanus, the vast plain of Damascus opens upon the view, a dreary and almost boundless waste, in the midst of which lies the vast lake or island of deep verdure, in the centre of which appears the city with its domes and white, graceful minarets, peering above the tree-tops in fragile beauty. Here, hard by the sacred heights of Salehiyeh, consecrated by the caverns and tombs of a thousand Musselmen saints, the prophet Mohammed is said to have stood, while yet a camel-driver from Mecca, and, after gazing upon the scene below, to have turned away without entering the city. "Man," he said, "can have but one Paradise, and my Paradise is fixed above."

The secret of this remarkable desert oasis is found in the irrigation produced by the Barada and the Awadj, the Arbana and Pharpar of Scripture, which, gushing forth from the mountains, have a fall, in the course of twenty-five miles, of over one thousand feet, and are distributed by countless sluices and canals over the plain. Thus its gardens, and orchards, and far-reaching groves, its fertile fields and sparkling rivulets, form the setting of the picture of the city, whose palaces look as gorgeous, and

Damascus. View looking Westward and outside of the Eastern Gate.

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whose mud-walled and homely houses in the bright sunlight look as gay, and whose gold-tipped minarets and domes look as bright, as if only completed yesterday. The scene is like a vision of Paradise—that is, in the distance. Damascus seems to repose in its ever-green bower, far removed from the din of commerce and the rude whirl of modern life, and it is not strange that the Emperor Julian should call it "the Eye of the East," or that, in Oriental phrase, it should be styled one of the four Paradises of the world. As the traveler draws nearer he passes through fragrant forests of walnuts, pomegranates, figs, plums, citrons, pears and apples, while the gentle breezes that rustle softly through the feathery tops of the palms are laden with the perfume of the rose and violet.

Upon entering the city the charm is rudely dispelled. "Houses, mosques, streets, and all the works of man bear the marks of neglect and decay, and man himself seems to sit there mourning moodily over the waning glory. The houses are shapeless piles of sun-dried bricks and wood, and sadly out of repair. The streets are narrow, crooked and filthy, paved with large, rough stones, and half covered with ragged mats and withered branches. Scores of miserable dogs lie in the dust, too lazy to bark, or even to crawl from under the horses' feet. In little stalls like shelves, along the sides of these lanes, squat ranges of long-bearded, white-turbaned, sallow-visaged men, telling their beads, and mingling, with muttered prayers to Allah, curses deep and

deadly on the infidels who dare to cross their path or enter their holy city."*

Yet within and around the city are places associated with events narrated in Scripture history. There is the "long, wide thoroughfare," leading direct from one of the gates to the castle or palace of the pasha, still called by the guides, as in the days of Paul (Acts ix. 11), by the name of "Straight." Over the wall the spot is pointed out where the apostle was let down in a basket. "On the old wall," says an explorer, "I have seen many a projecting chamber and many a latticed window from which a friendly hand might let down a fugitive." Less than a mile distant from the city, on the eastern side, is the Christian burial-ground, as also a rude mass of conglomerate stone, which marks the reputed scene of the apostle's conversion. Within the walls the traditional dwelling of Ananias is pointed out. The memory of the ancient King Ben-hadad is preserved in the name of a family which still bears the epithet of Beit Hadad, or house of Hadad. Outside the walls, on the banks of the Arbana, is a leper hospital, which tradition says occupies the site of Naaman's house, and the sight of its miserable inmates still recalls the pity which must have moved the heart of the little Jewish maiden at the sight of her master's sufferings. A Jewish synagogue, in the neighboring village of Jobar, marks the spot where, according to tradition, Elijah once lived, and where Elisha and Hazael met.

* Porter's Syria's Holy Places.

Strange and varied has been the history of this most ancient of all existing ancient cities. A Semitic settlement, founded by Uz, it was, perhaps, for a time, the residence of Abraham on his journey from Haran. It reappears in the time of David, when the Syrians of Damascus came to succor Hadadezer, king of Zobah. David subdued them and garrisoned the city. For successive generations Damascus, as the capital of Syria, occupied an attitude of hostility to Israel. It fell at last under the invasions of the Assyrians, and its inhabitants were carried away captive. In the time of Jeremiah it was said, "Damascus is waxed feeble and turneth to flee." Yet during the period of Persian domination it had been rebuilt, and had become the most famous place in Syria. Upon the defeat of Darius it was captured by the Greeks, and subsequently became the rival of Antioch. The Romans next subdued it and added it to their empire, and under them it was held, in the time of Paul, by Aretas, an Arabian prince. Under the Greek empire it grew in magnificence, and when captured by the Mohammedan Arabs (A. D. 634) it was one of the first cities in the Eastern world. It retained its rank, with scarcely an interruption of its prosperity, under the caliphs, the Saracens and the Turks.

Damascus has always been a commercial centre. Ezekiel, speaking of Tyre, says: "Damascus was thy merchant in the multitude of the wares of thy making, for the multitude of all riches, in the wine of Helbon and white wool." From time immemorial

caravans have passed through it and it has been a thoroughfare for trade from the Mediterranean to the interior of Western Asia, and such it is to-day. Perhaps no other city of the world has contributed so many phases of its own name to enrich the vocabularies of different nations. "From Damascus came the delicious apricot of Portugal, called damasco; damask, our beautiful fabric of cotton and silk, with vines and flowers raised upon a smooth, bright ground; damask rose, introduced into England in the time of Henry VII.; the damascus blade, so famous the world over for its keen edge and remarkable elasticity, the secret of the manufacture of which was lost when Tamerlane carried off the artists into Persia; and that beautiful art of inlaying wood and steel with silver and gold —a kind of mosaic engraving and sculpture united— called damaskeening, with which boxes and bureaus and swords and guns are ornamented. It is still a city of flowers and bright waters; the streams from Lebanon, the 'rivers of Damascus,' the 'river of gold,' still sparkle in the wilderness of gardens."

The prophecies concerning Damascus are quite unlike those uttered against Nineveh and Babylon. It is nowhere said that it shall be "desolate" or "without inhabitants," that none shall pass through it, or that it shall be "a desert" or "pools of water." Yet it was to undergo severe judgments. Amos, whose prophecies are ranged from 810 to 784 before Christ, speaks (i. 3–15) of its punishments: "Thus saith the Lord: For three transgres-

sions, and for four, I will not turn away the punishment thereof; because they have threshed Gilead with threshing instruments of iron. But I will send a fire into the house of Hazael which shall devour the palaces of Benhadad. I will also break the bar of Damascus, and cut off the inhabitant from the plain of Aven, and him that holdeth the sceptre from the plain of Eden; and the people of Syria shall go into captivity, saith the Lord." This was fulfilled when Tiglath Pileser took Damascus, and carried the people of it captive to Kir, a city of Media, and slew Rezin, their king, as narrated in 2 Kings xvi. 9. Still it is evident that, though the royal palaces may have been burned, and the city greatly desolated, the work of destruction was limited; for here Ahaz, king of Judah, met Tiglath Pileser, and here, too, he saw an altar from which he took a pattern for his own use. Nor would it have been for the interest of the king of Assyria to destroy utterly a city which he wished merely to make tributary to his empire.

To the same events, doubtless, Isaiah refers (viii. 4) when he prophesies as near at hand—that is, "before the child shall have knowledge to cry, My father and my mother"—the taking away by the king of Assyria of "the *riches* of Damascus and the spoil of Samaria." The city was to be plundered, to a serious extent ravaged, but not destroyed. Perhaps at a somewhat later date the prophet says (xvii. 1), "Damascus is taken away from being a city, and it shall be a ruinous heap." It is not at all improba

ble that Isaiah witnessed or at least learned the fulfillment of his own prediction. It is at least certain that the supremacy of Assyria verified the prediction (Isaiah xvii. 3) that "the kingdom should cease from Damascus."

Evidently it was a long period before Damascus arose from its ruins. More than a hundred years later Jeremiah says (xlix. 24): "Damascus is waxed feeble, and turneth herself to flee, and fear hath seized on her; anguish and sorrow," &c. And again: "How is the city of praise *not left*, the city of my joy." But even yet there was room for denunciation in almost the very words of Amos: "I will kindle a fire in the wall of Damascus, and it shall consume the palaces of Benhadad." Her young men also were to fall in her streets, and all the men of war were to be cut off in that day. She is described as confounded, faint-hearted and sorrowful for evil tidings.

We can readily see that for thousands of years after the words were uttered, and even down to the present time, these words have been having their fulfillment. The city has been rebuilt again and again, and against this there has been no prediction. But it was situated just where it was like to be ground down between conflicting empires. Ceasing to be the head of a large or independent kingdom of itself, it became the prize of war and military ambition. Sometimes it rose to eminence. Strabo says that it was the most famous place in Syria during the period of the Persian rule. Darius selected it as the

safest place in which, after the battle of Issus, he might deposit his treasures. Under the Seleucidæ, Antioch became its more favored rival; but eight hundred years later it had recovered its importance, and in the time of the Mohammedan invasion it was one of the finest cities of the Eastern world.

The prophecies concerning this city are more remarkable for what they omit than what they contain. Unlike nearly all the other empires or kingdoms of antiquity, it was only to be subjected to the ordinary fate of invaded or plundered cities. Its iniquities are not described like those of other nations. The judgment pronounced upon it by the prophet Amos was for its cruel invasion of Israel, not for any gross vices or idolatries, although it was by no means exempt from them. Still, it was far from being preeminent in wickedness; and thus, when Babylon is a desolation, and Nineveh masses of ruins, and Petra the rocky city of the dead, Damascus continues to exist, if not to flourish. Its recent experience, desolated by a conflagration, from which it is even yet scarcely recovered, reminds us of the sentence of old—the fire in the walls of Damascus.





JERUSALEM AND THE CITIES OF GALILEE.

THE prophecies contained in the New Testament, so far as they refer to the doom of ancient cities, have respect only to those of a minor rank. Nineveh had become a desert, Babylon was in ruins, and Rome had become the mistress of the world. Yet the Eastern traveler may still find, in Palestine and Asia Minor, many a scene of desolation which is fitly associated with the predictions of Christ or His apostles, and which attests their fulfillment.

We commence our survey with the capital of the Jewish nation. When Christ walked the streets of Jerusalem, or, from the top of Olivet, wept over its approaching doom, or, in the hour of mortal agony, bade the daughters of Jerusalem weep not for Him, but for themselves, the city could boast of a history that antedated by centuries the founding of Rome. Through strange vicissitudes it had survived all its ancient oppressors. Its kings had been contemporaries of the mightiest monarchs of Egypt, Babylonia and Assyria. The strains of its prophets, in a lofty eloquence or a grandeur of imagery which has for

ever distanced competition, had thrilled the soul of the nation long ages before Greece awoke to intel lectual life. Its Maccabees had proved that the most daring and desperate valor, like fire under the ashes, might be only sleeping in the bosoms of its people, waiting the occasion which should rekindle it to a terrible energy. Its temple, of grand proportions and surpassing beauty, still stood to excite the pride of the patriot and the admiration of the world. Why might not its history be continued and its prosperity be indefinitely prolonged?

Amid the groups that are gathered about the temple for curiosity or worship, we see a little band admiring its adornment "with goodly stones and gifts." One of them says to another, evidently the leader, "Master, see what manner of stones and what buildings are here." How memorable is the reply of Christ—how bold and improbable its prediction (Mark xiii. 2): "Seest thou these great buildings? There shall not be left one stone upon another that shall not be thrown down." Nor was this all. The time of the fulfillment of the prediction was fixed as near at hand. Jerusalem should be "compassed with armies." Some who heard the words of its doom, it is plainly intimated (Luke xxi. 32), should live to witness it. To them the gathering armies should be assurance "that the desolation thereof is nigh." Terrible should be the scenes of its overthrow, with "great distress in the land, and wrath upon this people." The work of slaughter should be followed by captivity. The Jews should

"be led away captive into all nations, and Jerusalem be trodden down of the Gentiles, till the times of the Gentiles be fulfilled."

How concise the description! How literally exact the fulfillment which history records! The account by Josephus of the capture of Jerusalem is but an extended commentary on Christ's prophecy. The city was "compassed with armies." The horrors of the siege were such as might be fitly described by Matthew (xxiv. 21) as "great tribulation, such as was not since the beginning of the world to this time, no, nor ever shall be." "Great tribulation" *was* in the land, and "wrath upon this people." The "days of vengeance" came. Within the walls were bigoted zealots, merciless with frantic ferocity, who established in the city a "reign of terror" unsurpassed in the annals of the French Revolution. The most wanton barbarities were committed. To the terrors of the foe without were added the unutterable horrors of famine within. Brutality, plunder, remorseless violence and wholesale murder were the order of the day. And when the city fell at last the slaughter was dreadful. An infuriated soldiery spared neither age nor sex. To the ravages of the sword succeeded the ravages of the flames. The temple—which the Roman general vainly tried to save—was burned, and throughout the city the torch of the incendiary was freely applied.

The Roman general, Titus, unaware of his own instrumentality in the fulfillment of prophecy, ordered the city to be destroyed and the temple to be razed

from its foundation. The order was executed with alacrity. The avarice of the soldiers, eagerly searching for hid treasures, made them prompt in the work of plunder. Scarce a vestige was left of the former glory of the city. According to Josephus, more than a million of men perished, and tens of thousands were carried into captivity and sold as slaves. The very markets were glutted, and "all nations" witnessed among them the presence of the captive Jew—a monument of the truth of Christianity and the fulfillment of prophecy. When, by Terentius Rufus, the city itself was ploughed over, it might well seem that the strangest portion of the prediction was already fulfilled. But there still remained one other feature of its doom for history to delineate. Jerusalem was to "be trodden down of the Gentiles till the times of the Gentiles be fulfilled." After its conquest by the Romans it remained for centuries "trodden down" by them. By the public edict of the Roman Emperor Hadrian—renewed by Constantius and again by Heraclius—it was made a capital crime for a Jew to set foot in Jerusalem, nor was he even allowed to gaze upon its ruins from the neighboring hills. The cumbrous structure of Roman power crumbled, but it brought him no hope. Mohammedans, with a fanaticism almost as fierce as that of the bigots that defied the Roman armies, took possession of the sacred city. Christian and Moslem afterward contended for generations, in mutual rivalry, to secure its possession. Its fate—whoever held it for the time—was to be

"trodden down of the Gentiles," and it is "trodden down" to this very day. In "the holy place" stands no Jewish temple, no Christian house of worship, but "the abomination of desolation," a Mohammedan mosque, as hateful to the Jew as it is grateful to the Moslem. For long generations the Jew has been treated as an outcast in sight of the spot where his fathers worshiped. He has been trampled on as devoid of humanity, as a brute rather than a man. A change, doubtless, is slowly and steadily taking place, but the curse will evidently cleave to him "till the times of the Gentiles be fulfilled," till the nations are brought, through the power of that religion which his fathers persecuted, to extend to him the full rights of human brotherhood. The words of the traveler* describing the ruins of the city are the fittest commentary on the prediction that one stone should not be left upon another: "I was sadly disappointed when, after weeks of careful and toilsome research, I could only discover a very few authentic vestiges of 'the city of the Great King;' a few fragments of the colossal wall that enclosed the temple courts; a few broken shafts here and there in the lanes or protruding from some noisome rubbish heap; a few remnants of the fortifications that once defended Zion. All besides is gone, buried deep, deep beneath modern dwellings."

Passing from Jerusalem in a direction somewhat east of north, and following the line of the valley of the Jordan, we come upon the Sea of Galilee,

* Rev. J. L. Porter.

some seventy or eighty miles distant. Along its shores, and in the cities and villages that lined them, Christ performed a large share of his public ministry. Among the most favored places, where He performed His miracles, and uttered His parables, and taught in the synagogues, were Chorazin, Bethsaida, and Capernaum. Upon these cities, guilty beyond the measure of Tyre and Sidon for their neglect of the heavenly message, the Saviour pronounced a memorable curse (Matt. xi. 21–24): "Woe unto thee, Chorazin! woe unto thee, Bethsaida! for if the mighty works which had been done in you had been done in Tyre and Sidon, they would have repented long ago in sackcloth and ashes. . . . And thou, Capernaum, which art exalted unto heaven, shalt be brought down to hell; for if the mighty works which have been done in thee had been done in Sodom, it would have remained until this day. But I say unto you, that it shall be more tolerable for the land of Sodom in the day of judgment than for thee."

It might indeed be a question how far these words have necessarily a respect to the physical condition of these guilty cities; but from their contrast in guilt with others whose predicted doom is attested by history, we may infer that in like manner the cities of Galilee were not to be exempt from the visible infliction of material desolation. The traveler is inevitably reminded of the "woe" pronounced upon them eighteen centuries ago as he approaches their sites and gazes upon their ruins. How impressive is

the testimony of Rev. J. L. Porter in the account which he gives of his exploration of their sites !—

"Before the morning sun o'ertopped the hills of Bashan I was in the saddle. A ride of three miles westward along the shore brought me to the ruins of a large town. It was encompassed by such a dense jungle of thorns, thistles and rank weeds that I had to employ some shepherds to open a passage for me. Clambering to the top of a shattered wall, I was able to overlook the whole site. What a scene of desolation was that! Not a house, not a wall, not a solitary pillar remains standing. Broken columns, hewn stones, sculptured slabs of marble, and great shapeless heaps of rubbish, half concealed by thorns and briers, alone serve to mark the site of a great and rich city. The Arabian does not pitch his tent there, the shepherd does not feed his flock there. Not a sound fell upon my ear as I stood amid those ruins, save the gentle murmur of each wave as it broke upon the pebbly beach, and the mournful sighing of the summer breeze through sun-scorched branches; yet that is the place where Chorazin once stood. Chorazin heard but rejected the words of mercy from the lips of its Lord, and He pronounced its doom: 'Woe unto thee, Chorazin!'

"After riding some miles farther along the lake, I reached a little retired bay with a pebbly strand—just such a place as fishermen would delight to draw up their boats and spread out their nets upon. Here were numerous fountains, several old tanks and aqueducts, great heaps of rubbish and fields of

ruin. Two Arab tents were pitched a little way up on the hill-side, but I saw no other trace there of human habitation or human life. And yet that is the site of Bethsaida, the city of Andrew and Peter, James and John (John i. 44; Matt. iv. 8; Luke v. 10). Upon this strand Jesus called His first disciples. Like Chorazin, this city heard and rejected His words, and like Chorazin it has been left desolate. 'Woe unto thee, Bethsaida!'

"A few minutes more and I reached the brow of a bluff promontory which dips into the bosom of the lake. Before me now opened up the fertile plain of Genessereth. At my feet, beneath the western brow of a cliff, a little fountain bursts from a rocky basin; a fig-tree spreads its branches over it, and gives it a name—*Ain et Tin*, the Fountain of a Fig. Beside it are some massive foundations, scarcely distinguishable amid the rank weeds, and away beyond it, almost covered with thickets of thorns, briers and gigantic thistles, I saw large heaps of ruins and rubbish. These are all that now mark the site of Capernaum. Christ's words are fulfilled to the letter: 'And thou, Capernaum, which art exalted unto heaven, shall be brought down to hell.'"





THE SEVEN CHURCHES OF ASIA.

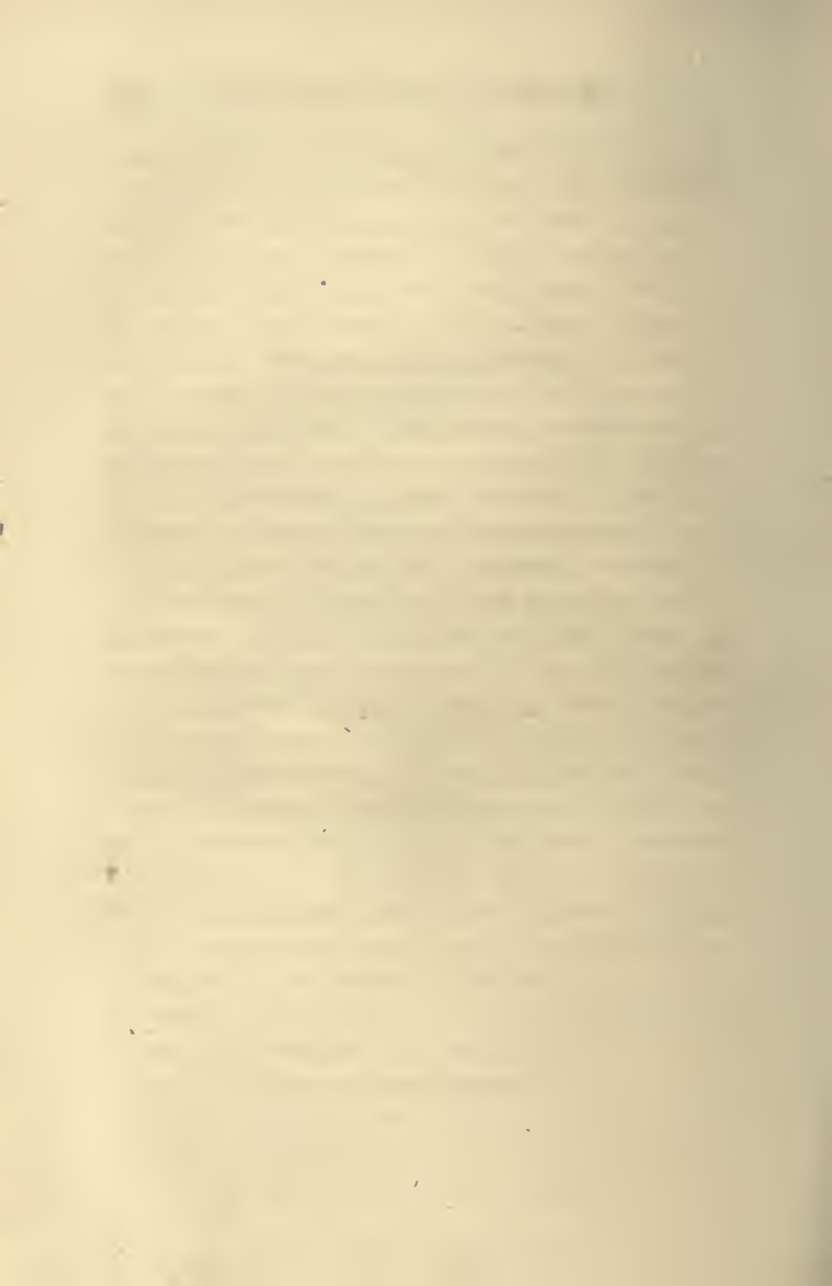
IN the Book of the Revelation of the Apostle John we have described to us the prophetic visions which were revealed to him in "the isle that is called Patmos." There we read the condemnatory sentence pronounced severally upon "the Seven Churches of Asia." Here also, as in the case of the cities of Galilee, we seem to find in their physical condition a reflection of the curse pronounced upon them. We might perhaps scarcely be warranted in saying that the desolations of the cities were an exact fulfillment of the sentence against the churches; but it is not difficult to trace a connection between their apostasy from the purity of a Christian profession and the visitations of that desolation by which they were finally overwhelmed.

"The Seven Churches" were those of Ephesus, Smyrna, Pergamos, Thyatira, Sardis, Philadelphia and Laodicea. All of these were situated in the western part of Asia Minor; Ephesus, Smyrna, Pergamos and Thyatira on or near the coast of the Mediterranean; the other three in the interior, at a



St. John's Bay; Isle of Patmos.

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distance of from one hundred to one hundred and fifty miles.

Ephesus was for many centuries a city of fame and splendor. It could boast of its magnificent temple, the temple of Diana, one of the wonders of the ancient world. The statue of the goddess was regarded with peculiar veneration, and was believed by the people to have fallen from the skies. Till later ages it was preserved in a shrine, on the adornment of which mines of wealth were expended. The temple itself was commenced nearly five and a half centuries before Christ, and its completion occupied two hundred and twenty years. It (the later temple) was more than four hundred feet long, and more than two hundred feet wide, and ornamented with one hundred and twenty-seven marble columns, each a single shaft and sixty feet high. Ancient art and wealth exhausted their resources to enrich its interior and embellish its walls. Throughout "Asia" it was regarded with universal awe and reverence. The city was naturally disposed to pride itself upon the glory which its temple conferred, and to resent anything which threatened to prejudice its fame. It is not strange that the presentation of the gospel by the Apostle Paul produced excitement and exasperation among the people. Well might he speak of himself, in his bold vindication of the truth of his message against frenzied and bigoted opposition, as having "fought with beasts at Ephesus."

But Christianity gained a foothold there. A church was formed, and, in spite of all opposition, it pros-

pered till it became one of the leading churches of the country. Tradition reports that it was the scene where the closing years of the Apostle John were spent, and that here he was buried. But before his career closed he gave utterance to the prophetic admonition addressed to the Church of Ephesus (Rev. ii. 5): "Remember, therefore, from whence thou art fallen, and repent and do thy first works; or else I will come unto thee quickly, and will remove thy candlestick out of his place, except thou repent."

For two or three centuries Ephesus seems to have enjoyed much of its ancient prosperity. Under the Romans it was the capital of the province, and as Christianity spread it became a metropolitan see. The invasion of the Goths, in the time of Gallienus, subjected it to plunder; but it recovered from the blow, and in the time of later emperors it was adorned with magnificent Christian temples. Toward the close of the eleventh century it became the stronghold of a Turkish pirate, and some two centuries later it fell permanently under Mohammedan sway. Already its port had become seriously obstructed, and thenceforth it ceased to offer temptations to commerce. Its magnificence sunk to decay, and the once splendid city has long been without a name. Its site is covered with ruins, and the traveler is left to meditate upon the lessons of its humbled greatness.

In 1677 Ephesus was "reduced to an inconsiderable number of cottages, wholly inhabited by Turks"

"This place," says Rycaut, at a somewhat later date, "where Christianity once so flourished as to be the mother church and the seat of a metropolitan bishop, cannot now show one family of Christians; so hath the secret providence of God disposed affairs too deep and mysterious for us to search into." In 1740 Pococke reports that there was not at that time a single Christian within two leagues around Ephesus. In 1824 Arundall says: "The desolation was complete. A Turk, whose shed we occupied, his Arab servant, and a single Greek, composed the entire population, some Turcomans excepted, whose black tents were pitched among the ruins."

These ruins still attest the former splendor of Ephesus.* The remains of the stadium or circus are still there—687 feet in length—but its area, not many years since, was a cornfield. Architectural fragments indicate the site of the theatre, while ruins of temples and vestiges of buildings are scattered here and there. No trace, however, for a long time, could be discovered of the Temple of Diana. It

* Rev. Dr. W. W. Patton, a recent visitor of Ephesus, remarks: "Those who visit Ephesus expecting to find temples and other buildings standing in lonely majesty, though partly ruined, will be disappointed. Here and there only does a fragment of a temple wall appear above the soil; while usually prostrate columns and scattered capitals, bases and cornices, and squared stones are the only evidences of the grandeur that was. Not a single erect column can be found in the whole city. Moreover—what is a curious sign of the utter overthrow of a city so celebrated, and a fact that, if predicted in Paul's days, would not have obtained credence—antiquarian critics cannot agree upon the sites of particular buildings; no, not even of the famous Temple of Diana itself."

was searched for in vain. But later travelers have imagined that in a confused mass of crumbled walls, broken pillars and other fragments, they have found the remains of the ruined structure.

The country around Ephesus is still remarkably fertile; but the site of the city, covered by fogs from the morasses around it, is very unhealthy. Chandler says: "Its streets were obscured and overgrown. A herd of goats was driven to it for shelter from the sun at noon, and a noisy flight of crows from the quarries seemed to insult its silence. We heard the partridge call in the area of the theatre and of the stadium." Successive travelers have remarked in substance, in the language of one of them, on the proof thus afforded—"that the threatening in the Revelation of St. John, 'I will remove thy candlestick out of its place, except thou repent,' was not denounced in vain."

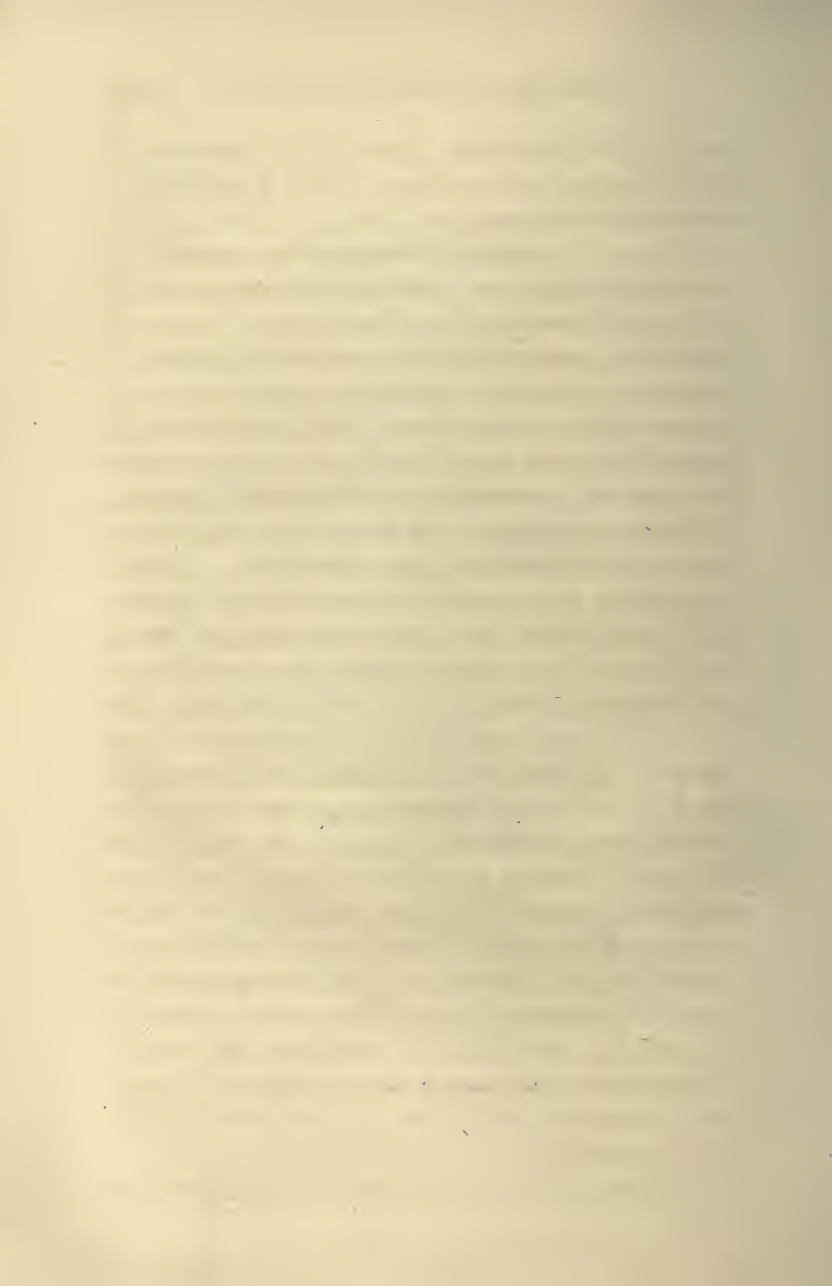
To Smyrna the language addressed by the apostle is not like that addressed to Ephesus. He speaks of past tribulations and poverty, and of trials and imprisonments which were yet to come. But there is no threat to remove "the candlestick." "Fear none of those things which thou shalt suffer" is the encouraging counsel given to the church.

Above all its contemporaries Smyrna has been spared the ravages of time, and hostile invasions. In Strabo's day it was "the most beautiful and splendid city of all Asia." The streets were broad and for the most part straight, well paved and decorated with stately palaces and colonnades. It



Pergamos; now Pergamo.

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could boast a public library and an excellent harbor; but its highest pride was that it could claim to be the birth-place of Homer.

At an early period Christianity was planted and flourished at Smyrna. The poverty and hardships of its early confessors were memorable. Seriously injured by earthquakes, and subjected repeatedly to siege, it is not strange that there are few remains still left of its ancient magnificence. After passing finally, and after having long been a prize to rival aspirants, into the possession of the Turks, its commerce and prosperity began steadily to revive, and though its present condition is quite inferior to its former grandeur, it now contains a population not far short of one hundred and fifty thousand. During the extended period of Turkish dominion, the Greek Church has retained a foothold here, and it has long been one of the important missionary stations of Asia Minor. The memory of the martyred Polycarp has lingered about the scenes where his fidelity was attested, and among the seven cities of Asia there is not one, according to Elliott, "within whose precincts the trumpet of the Gospel now gives so distinct and certain a sound. While Mohammed is acknowledged in twenty mosques, and Jews assemble in several synagogues, the faith of the Messiah is taught in an Armenian, five Greek and two Roman Catholic churches, and in two Protestant chapels—one connected with the English, the other with the Dutch consulate."

Pergamos was one of the most sumptuous cities

of Asia, and in Pliny's day was without a rival in the province. For centuries it had maintained an eminent position, combining the features of a Pagan cathedral city with those of a university town and a royal residence. It retained its claim as a sacred city even after the loss of its independence, and its worship of Esculapius and other heathen deities was more than ordinarily bigoted. Only by a conformity to the prevailing religious ceremonial could Jews or Christians hope to attain to the honors or emoluments of office. They were thus tempted, practically at least, to hold the doctrine of Baalam, and, in the hope of gain surrendered their conscientious convictions. Against this danger they were warned by the language of the apostle (Rev. ii. 14–16), who calls upon them: "Repent; or else I will come unto thee quickly, and will fight against thee with the sword of my mouth."

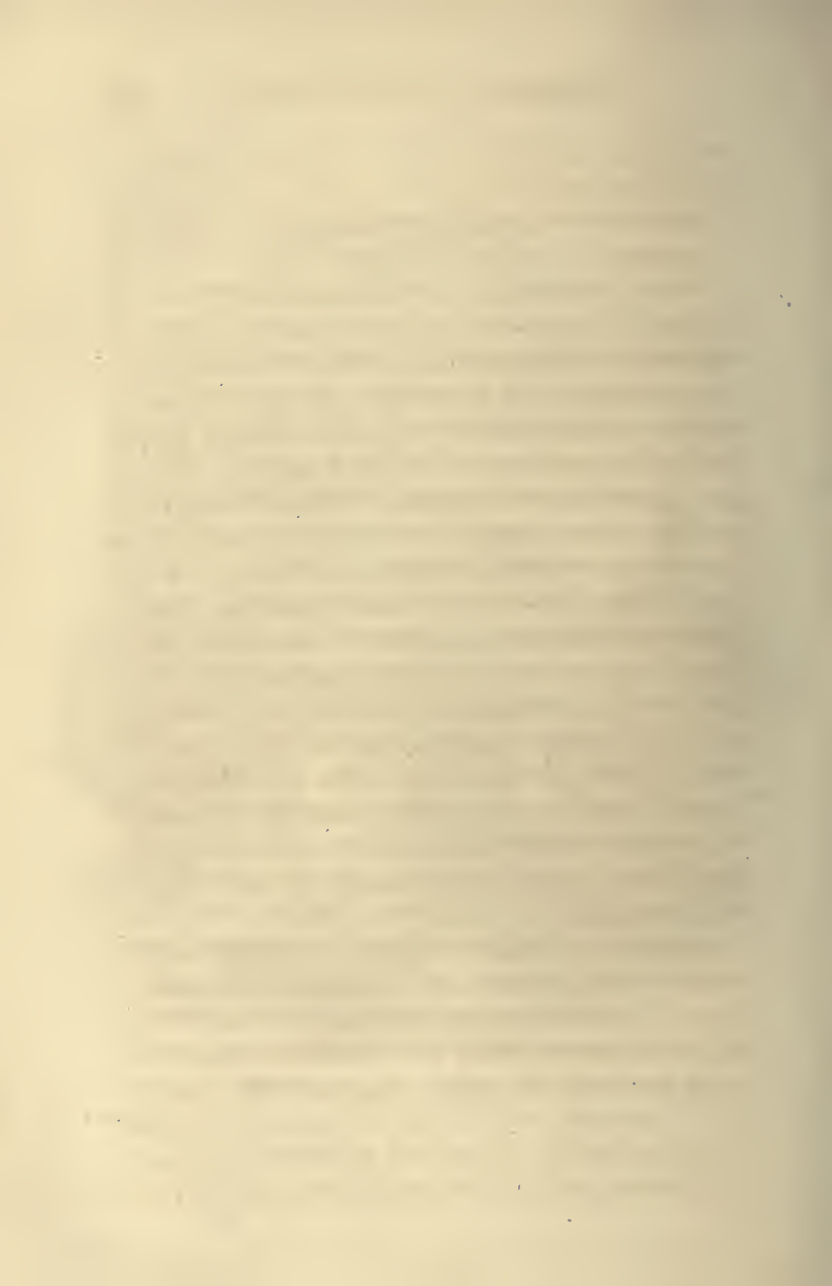
We trace the history of Pergamos for the last eighteen centuries, and find it one of almost uninterrupted decline. A few years since its population was estimated at about fifteen thousand, more than three-fourths of them Moslems. Its ruin has been effected by no catastrophe of earthquake or invasion, but by the steady progress of decay. The Lord has smitten it with "the sword of His mouth."

Thyatira, now known by its modern name of Ak Hissar, is situated on the left of the road from Pergamos to Sardis, near a small river, a branch of the Caicus. It stands in the centre of an extensive plain, eighteen miles broad, which some years since



Thyatira; now Ak Hissar.

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was reported by travelers as producing immense crops of the finest cotton, as well as corn. In almost every direction its horizon is bounded by the distant mountains.

At the date of the prophetic words addressed to the Church of Thyatira by the Apostle John the city was strong and flourishing. The Christian church had been planted there, but foreign and contaminating influences had already begun to affect its purity. It was noted for its "works, and charity, and service, and faith, and patience;" but "that woman, Jezebel, which calleth herself a prophetess," had been allowed "to teach and seduce" the servants of God, leading them "to commit fornication and to eat things sacrificed unto idols." With space given her to repent, "she repented not," and hence the threat of great tribulation to come upon her and on the partners of her guilt, in case they did not repent. "And I will kill her children," it is solemnly declared, "with death; and all the churches shall know that I am He which searcheth the reins and hearts; and I will give unto every one of you according to your works."

The miserable remains of ancient Thyatira are no unfitting comment on this sentence. Although it rose to greater prosperity after the days of the apostle, it was only to ripen for a hopeless decay. Of the ancient church edifice, worthy of the city, the Turks have destroyed every remnant; even its site is now unknown. A population of a few thousands occupies the miserable dwellings that have replaced

its ancient splendor, and nine mosques to one Greek and one Armenian church indicate the comparative feebleness of the Christian element, such as it is.

Sardis was the ancient residence of the kings of Lydia. Its position, two miles south of the Hermus, and in the midst of a region of remarkable fertility, contributed to increase its commercial importance. It was, indeed, for centuries a wealthy and enterprising mart, the home of art and luxury. From the days of Crœsus down to the times of the New Testament its fortunes had been varied, and it had passed from conqueror to conqueror. But in spite of all vicissitudes it retained much of its earlier splendor. Even so late as 1812 a traveler, Mr. Cockerell, found two columns of the massive temple of Cybele standing with their architrave, the stone of which, though by no means the largest to be found, he estimated as weighing twenty-five tons. It stretched in a single block from the centre of one column to that of the other. The columns themselves, originally about sixty feet high, are more than six feet in average diameter, while, in the judgment of the traveler, "the capitals appeared to surpass any specimen of the Ionic he had seen in perfection of design and execution." On the north side of the acropolis, overlooking the valley of the Hermus, is a theatre nearly four hundred feet in diameter, attached to a stadium of about one thousand.

Sardis must still have been the seat of prosperity and splendor when the prophetic words were written

(Rev. iii. 1, 2): "I know thy works, that thou hast a name, that thou livest and art dead. . . . I have not found thy works perfect before God." With this declaration is coupled the charge to repent, to watch: "If thou shalt not watch, I will come upon thee as a thief." There were still "a few names, even in Sardis, which had not defiled their garments," and these should come forth purified and safe. But, with this exception, the prospect of Sardis is simply dark and calamitous.

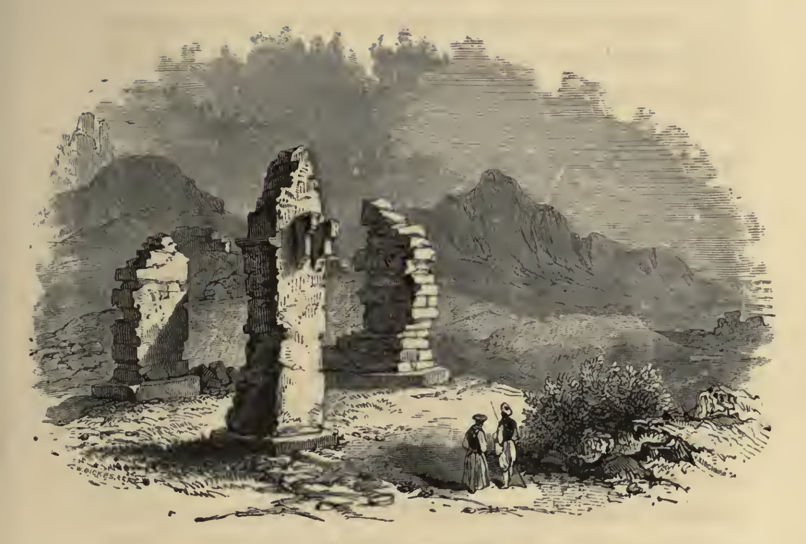
Is not its doom suggested to us by the narrative of the ruins of the city now known as Sart Kalesi? Travelers approaching it note its appearance as that of complete solitude. The Pactolus, once the golden stream, shrinks amid the heats of summer to a mere rill. A few villages are scattered over the broad plain, and the site of the ancient city, once the residence of the rich and great, had become, a generation since, a pasture for herds. Its inhabitants, caring for their cattle, lived in clay cottages not more than six feet in height. The portico of its single Turkish mosque was adorned with grand antique pillars; but not a Christian was to be found among its inhabitants. The American missionaries who explored the field did not discover a Christian family. "Everything," they said, "seems as if God had cursed the place, and left it to the dominion of Satan."

Yet the view of its ruins is grand and impressive. In Chandler's day five of the columns of the temple of Cybele were still standing. In 1812 only three

were left. Yet the ruined remains attest the former magnificence of the temple. Elsewhere there are memorable fragments of departed glory. Walls of brick and stone, half crumbled to the earth; the colossal tumulus or barrow of Alyattes, five miles distant from the city—one of those monuments of Lydian kings which Herodotus in his day thought might almost vie with the works of Babylonian or Egyptian kings; the artificial lake, still more distant, and other evidences of ancient skill, attest the greatness of the change which has passed over this former capital of the Lydian kings.

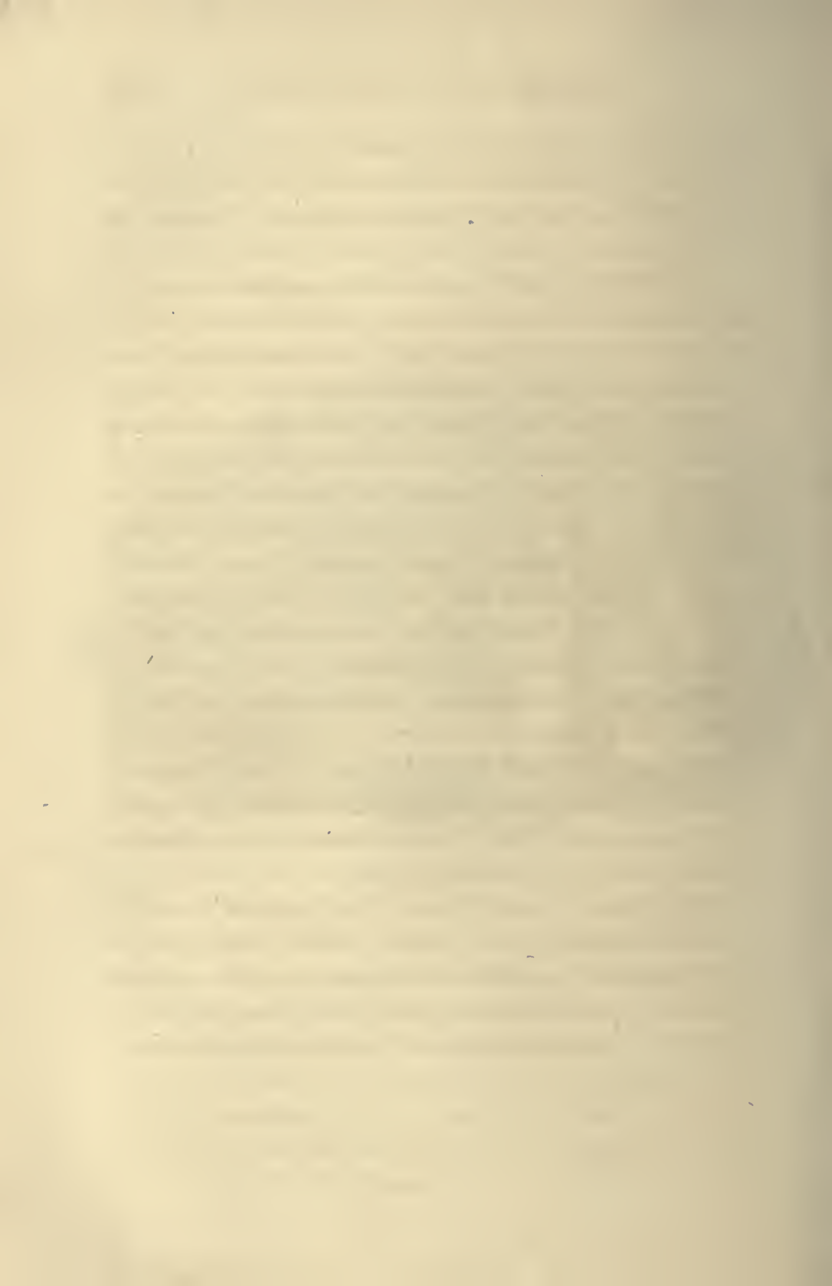
Its present condition, taken in connection with the fact that in the year seventeen of our era it was overthrown by an earthquake, suggests the method by which its ruin was suddenly brought upon it. It was to come in a moment and to come without warning; and it seems as if nothing but the earthquake's shock could overthrow a temple like that which must once have contributed so much to its beauty and its renown. In the year 400 A. D. it was plundered by the Goths, and their invasion may have been no less desolating than a convulsion of nature. On the site of its desolated grandeur we may profitably meditate on the memorable words, "I have not found their works perfect before God."

To the Church at Philadelphia was addressed a message which presented to view a brighter prospect (Rev. iii. 8–10): "I know thy works. . . . Thou hast a little strength and hast kept my word, and hast not denied my name. . . . Because thou



Sardis; now Sart Kalesi.

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hast kept the word of my patience, I also will keep thee from the hour of temptation, which shall come upon all the world to try them that dwell upon the earth."

Philadelphia was situated on the confines of Lydia and Phrygia, about twenty-five miles east of Sardis. In every direction the prospect is one which indicates the powerful volcanic action which, amid the fertile soil, has upheaved masses and ranges of rugged rock. Occupied by Macedonian colonists ages, perhaps, after it was founded by Attalus II., king of Pergamos, it received at an early date the message of the Gospel. We may presume, from the language of the Sacred Record, that it had a synagogue of Hellenizing Jews as well as a Christian church. The last received an honorable testimony to its fidelity, and the assurance that its jealous neighbor of the synagogue should know that it was beloved of God. Undoubtedly this promise was fulfilled in the subsequent centuries, which witnessed the total disappearance of the semi-Jewish, semi-Christian worship.

Philadelphia is now known by the name of Allah Shehr, or the City of God.* While many of its neighbors have suffered by earthquakes, it still remains a considerable town, the residence of a bishop. It retains yet many a monument of its religious history. The number of its churches, though mostly in ruins, was reckoned, a generation since, at twenty-four. Six of them, however, are in su-

* See Frontispiece.

perior repair and are provided with priests. The liturgies and offices of the Greek Church are still read, and have undergone no alteration for centuries.

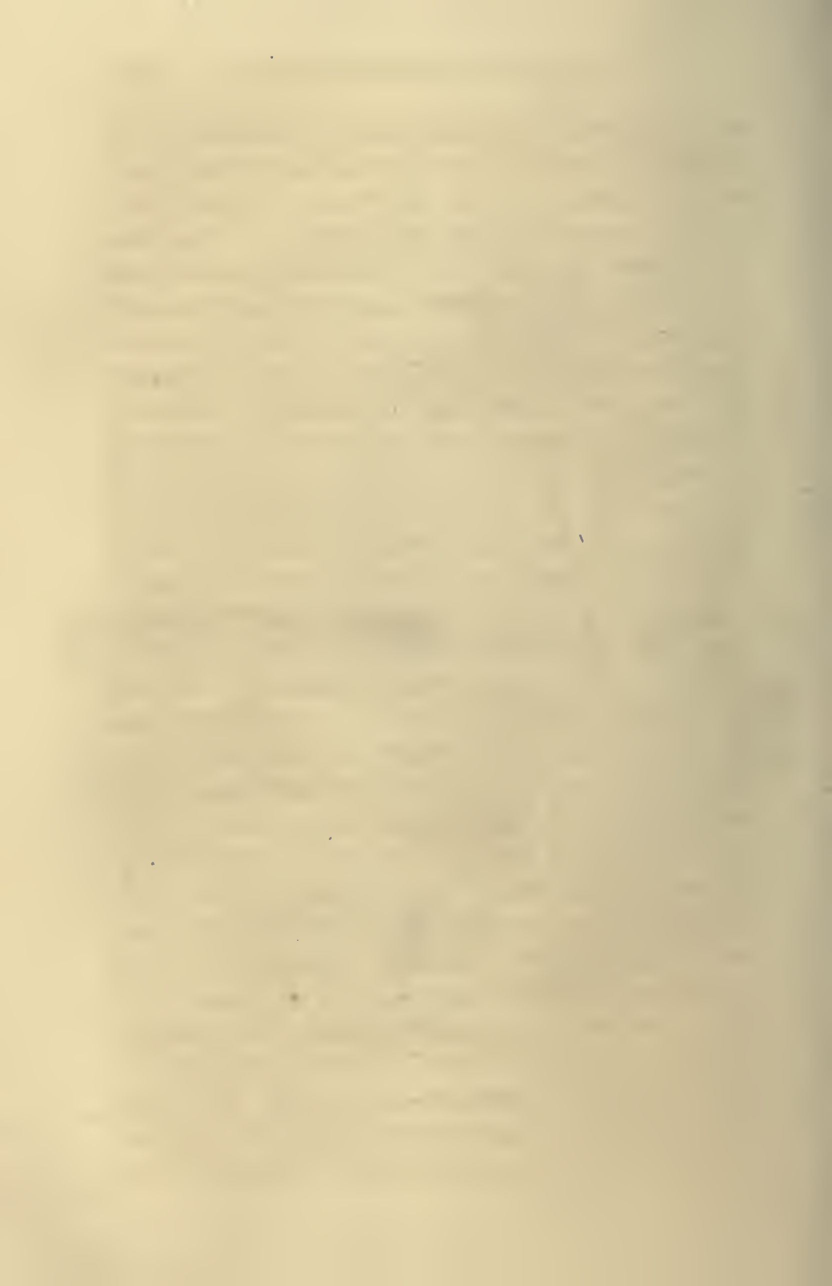
In 1820 the city was visited by the American missionaries Parsons and Fisk. They reported five churches in it which were still in use. "Although what retains the form and name of Christianity in this interesting site is little better than the exanimate carcass of a church, yet, taken in connection with the distinguishing encomium passed upon the Church of Philadelphia in the Apocalypse, its survival at this remote period must be considered as a most impressive fact. It would seem as if, in a literal sense, this church had been 'kept from the hour of temptation' which was announced as about to come upon all the world, to try them that dwell upon the earth; and which emphatically did come (in whatever other interpretation the prediction be taken) when the Christian Empire of the East became annihilated before the devastating sword of Mohammed and the victorious Crescent."

In the New Testament period, Laodicea, which had long been an inconsiderable place, had become one of the largest towns of Phrygia, and vied in power with the cities of the sea-coast. In the midst of its prosperity the Church of the Laodiceans was addressed in words of rebuke (Rev. iii. 15, 16): "I know thy works, that thou art neither cold nor hot; I would thou wert cold or hot; so, then, because thou art lukewarm, and neither cold nor hot, I will spew thee out of my mouth."



Ruins of Laodicea.

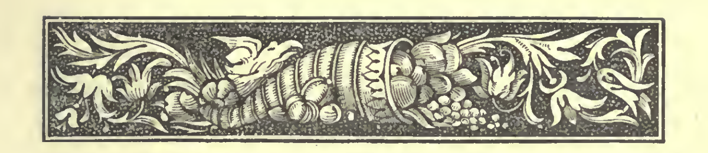
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The traveler, wandering over the ruined site of the city, appropriately recalls these significant words. He remembers the language of the apostle, who describes its wealth and self-sufficiency, "rich and having need of nothing." He remembers that under the Roman government it was a place of importance; that Paul did not forget it in his Epistles; that it became subsequently eminent as a Christian city and a meeting-place of councils; that it is repeatedly mentioned by the old Byzantine writers, and continued to have at least a name to live till the time of Moslem invasion. But the words recur to him: "I will spew thee out of my mouth," and he looks around him upon a scene of utter desolation. "The hill of Laodicea," says Chandler, "consists of a dry, impalpable soil, porous, with many cavities, resembling the bore of a pipe, as may be seen on the sides, which are bare. It resounded beneath our horses' feet. We had occasion to dig, and found the earth as hard as any cement. Beneath, on the north, are stone coffins, broken, subverted, or sunk in the ground." In 1097 A. D. it was captured by the Turks. A quarter of a century later it was retaken and rebuilt. It passed thus from one power to another in the lapse of centuries, till its very name became a thing of the past. "We saw," says Chandler, "no traces of houses, churches or mosques. All was silence and solitude. Several strings of camels passed eastward over the hill; but a fox, which we first discovered by his ears peeping over a brow, was the only inhabitant of Laodicea." The

ruins of an amphitheatre, a magnificent odeum and of other public buildings, still remain, and the whole surface within the line of the city wall is strewn with pedestals and fragments. There is every sign that the city was once the seat of the greatest luxury and magnificence. But the glory has long departed, and the solitary scene of desolation seems to echo with the words, 'I will spew thee out of my mouth.'"





A GENERAL SURVEY OF SCRIPTURE PROPHECY.

CONCLUDING REMARKS.

A CANDID examination of the fulfillment of those predictions in respect to ancient nations, which have been now considered, cannot fail to enforce the claims of the Bible to a divine authority. They are utterly inexplicable on any other theory than that "holy men of old spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost."

But the argument which they present becomes, if possible, more conclusive when we consider the place which these prophecies occupy in the sacred volume. They are an integral part of it; not accidental appendages—not mere episodes—not a foreign or incongruous element. They belong to the very warp and woof of it, and the attempt to separate them can find no warrant in any imaginary line by which they may be distinguished from other portions of the sacred writings.

For they do not stand alone. The prophetic element pervades the Scriptures. In a very important

and emphatic sense, the Bible is almost one continuous prophetic record. To a very large extent, its narratives are testimony to fulfilled prophecy. The history of the varied fortunes of the Jewish nation is just a providential comment on predictions that were uttered, sometimes centuries before. The history of the Acts of the Apostles and the vicissitudes of the early Church simply verifies the prophetic declarations of Christ himself, while the gospel narratives set forth the character and work of the founder of Christianity, and thus record the fulfillment of the words of ancient prophets which have respect to Him. Many a statement, which might appear at first view, to the cool scrutiny of the critic, as very common-place and by no means important, becomes, on closer examination, a striking testimony to the fulfillment of prophecy.

Bearing this in mind, we shall be better prepared to appreciate the extent to which the prophetic element pervades the Scriptures. It is the golden thread which runs through them and by which they are strung together. The very scheme of redemption implies the anticipation of a glorious final result. It is the device of His infinite wisdom who sees the end from the beginning, and who knows every step by which the grand consummation is to be reached. Every provision, every institution, every utterance has reference to the future. The links that meet the eye belong to a chain which reaches unbroken from Eden lost to Paradise regained. The prophetic element is everywhere implied.

To bring this properly before us would indeed require volumes; but even a hasty and summary review of unquestioned predictions, more or less directly connected with the history of the Church, and the development of the scheme of redemption, may serve to impress our minds with the remarkable extent to which Scripture is pervaded with the spirit of prophecy. At the same time we shall hastily glance over a field where the evidences of inspired prediction are as thickly strewn as over the ruins of ancient empires.

In our examination of Scripture we are confronted at the very outset with prophetic declarations. The original transgression casts its dark shadow over the future of the race. Before man knows what death is, the sentence is pronounced, "dust thou art, and unto dust shalt thou return." For his sin the earth is subjected to the curse that cleaves to it for uncounted centuries, producing still "thorns and thistles." Every human birth testifies the fulfillment of the prophecy of "sorrow and conception." The prostrate form of the serpent, and the ineradicable repugnance with which, in spite of his beauty or his graceful form and movements, he is everywhere regarded, are foreshadowed in the curse pronounced upon him. The lot of humanity is still read in the words, "in the sweat of thy brow shalt thou eat thy bread till thou return unto the ground."

The Deluge was foretold in the declaration (Gen. vi. 17), "I do bring a flood of waters upon the earth to destroy all flesh." That such a judgment

in all after centuries should not be repeated is predicted in the words (Gen. ix. 11), "Neither shall there any more be a flood to destroy the earth." The history of the descendants of Canaan, subjected to the dominion of the Israelites, is prefigured in the sentence pronounced upon him (Gen. ix. 25), "Cursed be Canaan; a servant of servants shall he be unto his brethren." The superior fortunes of his brethren, attested by history, were set forth long before they had a history in the promise (Gen. ix. 27), 'God shall enlarge Japheth, and he shall dwell in the tents of Shem; and Canaan shall be his servant."

With the calling of Abraham, and the institution in his family of the Church of God, we have a new class of prophecies. The descendants of Adam and of Noah had rapidly degenerated, but Abraham was to be "the father of the faithful." The result which in large measure has flowed from the fountain of the Abrahamic covenant, and the relation of Christ to him as his seed "according to the flesh," is distinctly intimated in the assurance (Gen. xii. 3), "In thee shall all families of the earth be blessed." Long before the land of Canaan was occupied by his descendants the promise of it was given (Gen. xii. 7).* Those descendants were to be exceedingly numerous (Gen. xiii. 16), as "the dust of the earth," and (Gen. xv. 5) as "the stars" of heaven.† Their

* See also Gen. xiii. 15; xv. 7, 18.

† Also Gen. xvii. 2; xxii. 17.

history is given in its leading outlines, traced by the pen of prophecy (Gen. xv. 13). They were to be strangers in a land that was not theirs. They were to serve as bondmen there, and to be afflicted for four hundred years. The nation whom hey served (14) was then to be judged, and the oppressed people were to "come out with great substance." In the fourth generation (16), when the iniquity of the Amorites was full, they were to return to Canaan, and enter upon the possession of the promised land.

Meanwhile to Abraham, "as good as dead," a seed was promised (Gen. xv. 4; xvii. 16, 19; xviii. 14), and Isaac was born. He went (as was foretold Gen. xv. 15) to his fathers in peace, and was "buried in a good old age." Yet he had listened to prophecies that were to wait centuries for their fulfillment, and which were completed in the history of his descendants. The land in which he was a stranger—"all the land which thou seest"--was to pass into their hands (Gen. xvii. 8) as a *permanent* possession. The promise (Gen. xvii. 4), "Thou shalt be a father of many nations," and (6) "I will make nations of thee, and kings shall come out of thee," however strange and improbable it might appear, was to be fulfilled.

But to his descendants many of the promises made to him were substantially repeated. To Isaac it was said (Gen. xxvi. 3), "To thee and unto thy seed will I give all these countries, and I will perform the oath which I sware unto Abraham thy

father."* In his seed also was it said "all the nations of the earth shall be blessed." These promises were made in substance to Jacob also.† The fact is kept distinctly in view that the prophecies were not to be left to become a dead letter, although their fulfillment might be remote.

Before the wonderful consummation we are met by another line of prophecy. Joseph's dreams (Gen. xxxvii. 6–10) plainly foreshadow the future relation in which he should stand to his father's family. The fate of Pharaoh's chief butler and baker (Gen. xl. 5–20), and the years of plenty and of famine that were to come upon the land of Egypt (Gen. xli. 1–7), take their place among the events of prophecy. Jacob's patriarchal blessing on his several sons foreshadows (Gen. xlix.) the future character and experience of the Jewish tribes.

To Moses, keeping the flock of Jethro in Horeb, the promise was made (Ex. iii. 12) that when he had brought forth the chosen people from Egypt, he should serve God upon that mountain. To the Israelites in their bondage the assurance was given (17) that they should be brought "up out of the affliction of Egypt," and conducted unto the land of the Canaanites. Moses was assured, doubtful as his past experience had taught him to be, "they shall hearken to thy voice." Yet (19) was it declared, "the king of Egypt will not let you go."

* For other prophecies repeated to Isaac, see Gen. xxvi. 4, 24; xxviii. 14.

† Gen. xxviii. 15; xxxv. 11, 12.

To rebuke this obstinacy, it was foretold (20), "I will stretch out my hand and smite Egypt with all my wonders, which I will do in the midst thereof, and after that he will let you go." Nor is this all. The people (21) should have favor in the sight of the Egyptians, and should not go forth empty. Indeed it was said (22), "Ye shall spoil the Egyp tians."

Still more explicitly it was declared (Ex. vi. 6, 7), "I will bring you out from under the burdens of the Egyptians, and I will rid you out of their bondage, and I will redeem you with an outstretched arm, and with great judgments, and I will take you to me for a people. And I will bring you unto the land concerning the which I did swear to give it to Abraham, to Isaac and to Jacob; and I will give it you for a heritage." The triumph of the Israelites over the foes they should be called to meet was foreshadowed in the promise (Ex. xiv. 14), "The Lord shall fight for you." The passage of the Red Sea (Ex. xiv. 16) by means of miracle; the gift of the manna in the wilderness (Ex. xvi. 4), by the "raining bread from heaven;" the smiting of the rock (Ex. xvii. 9) and the outgushing of water from it, were all foretold. The approach of God to Moses (Ex. xix. 9) "in a thick cloud;" the guardianship of the "Angel" (Ex. xxiii. 20) sent before the children of Israel to keep them in the way and bring them into the place prepared for them; the driving out (Ex. xxxiii. 2) of the Canaanites, &c; their gradual defeat (Ex. xxiii. 30) and subjection, till their conquerors grew

strong to inherit the land, are distinctly and repeatedly predicted. So also is the intimate converse which the people should enjoy with Jehovah, for (Ex. xxix. 43) God would "meet with" them, and the tabernacle should be sanctified by his glory. Moreover, he would "dwell among them and be their God."

Again and again is the assurance repeated that Israel should possess the land promised to their fathers. Yet those who transgressed in the wilderness (Num. xiv. 22, 23) were to be excluded. Neither they nor any who had provoked God were to be permitted to see it. Their carcasses (29) were to fall in the wilderness, and their children were (33) to "wander in the wilderness forty years." Their subsequent rout by the Amalekites (Num. xiv. 43) was foretold. The healing power of a sight of the brazen serpent was declared (Num. xxi. 8) before it was experienced.

The prophetic element pervades the threatenings against the Israelites for their sin, and the promises made to them upon their obedience, to such an extent that by its light we may interpret nearly all the succeeding history of the nation. If they failed to drive out the inhabitants of the land, then it should come to pass (Num. xxxiii. 55) that those who remained should be "pricks in their eyes and thorns in their sides, and should vex them in the land in which they dwelt." The people were so to be multiplied as to warrant the question (Num. xxiii. 10), "who can count the dust of Jacob, and the number

of the fourth part of Israel?" Yet it is said of them, and every student of history can feel the force of the description (9), "the people shall dwell alone, and shall not be reckoned among the nations." If they refused to hearken to the words of God and to keep his commandments, they were to be visited (Deut. xxix. 22) with plagues. "Terror, consumption, and the burning ague" (Lev. xxvi. 14) should be appointed over them to "consume the eyes and cause sorrow of heart." They should sow their seed in vain; they should be slain (17) before their enemies; those that hated them should reign over them; their land should not yield its increase; their cattle should be destroyed; they should be robbed of their children; the sword should be brought upon them to avenge the quarrel of God's covenant; the pestilence should be sent upon them in their cities; the staff of their bread should be broken; they should be chastised "seven times" for their sins; they should eat the flesh of their sons and their daughters; their high places should be destroyed and their idols cut down; the cities should be waste and the sanctuaries desolate, while the people should be (33) scattered among the heathen, and a sword should be drawn out after them.*

Still, the promise of possessing the land of Canaan was to be fulfilled (Deut. ix. 5). Into the hands of Israel (Deut. vii. 24) kings were to be delivered,

* For a still more minute detail of threatened judgments, see Deut. xxviii. For fulfillment, see especially the account given in Judges and the books of Samuel and Kings

and their name was to be destroyed from under heaven. The Lord would (Deut. xi. 23) drive out the nations before them, and they should possess greater nations and mightier than themselves. Yet was it foretold by Moses (Deut. xxxi. 29), "after my death ye will utterly corrupt yourselves, and turn aside from the way I commanded you, and evil will befall you in the latter days." Nor did he fail to depict the fortune and destiny (Deut. xxxiii. 6–26) of the several tribes.

With their future history thus depicted in the lights and shadows of prophecy, we direct our attention to more specific predictions. The waters of the Jordan (Josh. iii. 13) were to open a passage for the people to the promised land. Upon their transgression the nations should no more be driven out, but should become (Josh. xxiii. 13), as we know they were, "snares and traps" to them. In their impatient desire for a king the prophet faithfully forewarned them (1 Sam. viii. 11) of the inevitable despotism under which they were within three generations made to groan. In case they still refused, when a king was granted to their request, to obey the Divine commands (1 Sam. xii. 15), the hand of the Lord should be against them, as it had been against their fathers. Yet (22) the Lord would not forsake his people for his great name's sake, because it had pleased him to make them his people.

At an early period it had been declared (Num. xxiv. 18) that Edom should be a possession, that a sceptre (17) should rise out of Israel and smite the

corners of Moab; that out of Jacob (19) should come He that should have dominion. It is under the kings of Judah and Israel that we see these predictions fulfilled, and the fulfillment itself, in one instance, prefaced by another prediction of Elisha (2 Kings iii. 17), accompanied by a miraculous provision of water for the thirsty host.

As the people of Judah ripened for judgment, the predictions of their invasion and captivity were multiplied. God would bring evil upon Jerusalem (2 Kings xxii. 16), but Josiah was to be spared the sight of it. Over Jerusalem (2 Kings xxi. 13) should be stretched the line of Samaria and the plummet of the house of Ahab, and God would wipe Jerusalem as a man wipeth a dish—wiping it and turning it upside down—while the people should become a prey and spoil to all their enemies. The people might, in their fear and trembling (2 Kings xxv. 26) on account of the Chaldeans, turn for help to Egypt, but the vanity of this resource was declared (Isa. xxx. 3): "The strength of Pharaoh shall be your shame, and the trust in the shadow of Egypt your confusion."* All the families of the kingdoms of the north (Jer. i. 15) should be called, and every one should set his throne at the entering of the gates of Jerusalem.† A nation (Jer. v. 15) should come from far—a mighty nation, an ancient nation, a nation whose language the Jews understood not.

* For the marked fulfillment of this see 2 Kings xxiv. 2.

† See also Jer. xxxvii. 7, and Ezek. xvii. 17, for this prediction, strikingly fulfilled under Zedekiah.

All the families of the north (Jer. xxv. 9) and Nebuchadnezzar, king of Babylon, should be summoned against the land and its inhabitants, and the nations around (Jer. ix. 25)—Egypt and Edom, and the children of Ammon and Moab, as well as Judah—should be punished and become "perpetual desolations." The people should only deceive themselves in saying (Jer. xxxvii. 9), The Chaldeans shall surely depart from us; for the city (Jer. xxxviii. 3) should surely "be given into the hand of the king of Babylon's army," and he should take it.

All the leading events that accompanied and followed the capture of the city are quite minutely foretold. The people were to be consumed (Jer. xiv. 12; xv. 2; xxi. 7) by the sword, and by famine, and by pestilence. The city itself (Jer. vii. 10, and lii. 13) was to be captured and burned with fire (Amos ii. 5). Out of the cities of Judah and the streets of Jerusalem (Jer. vii. 34) the voice of mirth and the voice of gladness, the voice of the bridegroom and the voice of the bride, should be made to cease. The cities of the south (Jer. xiii. 19) should be shut up, and none should open them; Judah should be carried away captive. The bands that surrounded Zedekiah, the fleeing king (Ezek. xii. 14), should be scattered toward every wind, and the sword should be drawn out after all that were about him to help him and all his bands. Those who set their faces to go into Egypt to sojourn there were not to escape the common misery. They also

(Jer. xlii. 17) were to die by the sword, the famine, and the pestilence.

A few men, indeed (Ezek. xii. 14), were to be left from the sword. But the temple (Jer. xxii. 5) was to become "a desolation," and (Jer. lii. 17, 18) the brass, the silver and gold of Jerusalem were to be carried away.* The remnant of the people, including those who fled to Egypt (Jer. xxiv. 8), were to be delivered "to be removed into all the kingdoms of the earth."† Zion (Micah iii. 12) should be "ploughed as a field, and Jerusalem should become heaps, and the mountains of the house as the high places of the forest."

Still, from the first (Jer. v. 18), it is declared by the Lord, "I will not make a full end with you." (Jer. xxx. 11), "Though I make a full end of all the nations whither I have scattered thee, yet will I not make a full end of thee." (16), "They that spoil thee shall be a spoil, and all that prey upon thee will I give for a prey."

The captivity was to endure (Jer. xxv. 11) for seventy years. On the expiration of this period (Jer. xxix. 10) the people should return again to Jerusalem. "I will cause them, saith the Lord (Jer. xxx. 3, 18), to return to the land that I gave to their fathers. . . . I will bring again the captivity of Jacob's tent and have mercy on his dwelling-place, and the city shall be builded upon her own heap." He that scattered Israel (Jer. xxxi. 10)

* See especially Isa. xxxix. 6, and Jer. xxvii. 21, 22.

† See also Jer. xv. 4.

would gather him, and keep him as a shepherd doth his flock. Out of all countries whither they had been driven (Jer. xxiii. 3) the remnant should be gathered.* The sacred vessels also (Jer. xxvii. 22) were to be restored. From the north country and from the coasts of the earth the people (Jer. xxxi. 8) were to be recalled, even the blind and the lame. They should come (10) "with weepings and with supplications;" and God, as their shepherd (Ezek. xxxiv. 13), should feed them upon the mountains of Israel. The voice of joy and thanksgiving should be heard among them, and they should no longer be contemned and despised. The voice of the watchman should be heard (Jer. xxxi. 6) crying, "Arise ye, and let us go up to Zion, to the Lord our God." There should be no more (Jer. xxxvii. 22) two kingdoms; but (Hos. i. 11) the children of Judah and the children of Israel, multiplied as the sand of the sea, should be gathered together and appoint themselves one head. They should (Amos ix. 14) build the waste cities and inhabit them. From beyond the rivers of Ethiopia (Zeph. iii. 10) the Lord's suppliants, even the daughter of his dispersed, should bring his offering. Jerusalem (Zech. ii. 4) should be inhabited as towns without walls, for the multitude of men and cattle therein.

The glory of the second temple also (Hag. ii. 9) was to be greater than that of the first, for in it the Lord promised to give peace. Many people also

* Compare also Jer. xxiv. 6; Ezek. xi. 17; xx. 34; xxxv[illegible]. 24.

(Zech. viii. 22) and strong nations should come to seek the Lord of hosts in Jerusalem, and to pray before the Lord. Yet was it foretold (Hos. iii. 4) that the children of Israel should abide many days without a king, and without a prince, and without a sacrifice, and without an ephod, and without teraphim. Yet afterward (5) should they return and seek the Lord their God and David their king, and should fear the Lord and his goodness in the latter days.

If now, considering the persistent apostasy of the chosen people, and their final provocation of divine justice in the rejection of the Messiah, we read their history in the light of the threatenings uttered more than a thousand years before, we shall find in those threatenings the language of the historian as well as the prophet. Let one turn back from the perusal of the account of the siege of Jerusalem to the words of Moses (Deut. xxvii.), and he will feel that no more vivid description of its horrors could be drawn by the pen of an eye-witness: "The Lord shall bring a nation against thee from far, from the end of the earth, as swift as the eagle flieth, a nation whose tongue thou shalt not understand; a nation of fierce countenance, which shall not regard the person of the old, nor show favor to the young. . . . And he shall besiege thee in all thy gates, until thy high and fenced walls come down. . . . And thou shalt eat the fruit of thine own body, the flesh of thy sons and thy daughters, . . . in the siege and in the straitness wherewith thine enemies shall distress

thee. The Lord will make thy plagues wonderful. . . . Ye shall be left few in number. . . . Ye shall be plucked from off the land. . . . And the Lord shall scatter thee among all people from the one end of the earth even unto the other. . . . And among these nations shalt thou find no ease, neither shall the sole of thy foot have rest. . . . And thy life shall hang in doubt before thee, and thou shalt fear day and night, and shalt have none assurance of thy life."

What language could more graphically and truthfully describe the condition of the Jewish people from the siege of Jerusalem almost to the present day? Yet we have seen all the leading events of their ancient history outlined in the very words of the prophets. The narrative of the sacred historians is very largely a historical comment—full of deepest significance—upon the words of the prophets. Additional force might be given to these considerations, if space allowed us more than a mere allusion to the language of Hosea and other prophets concerning the kingdom of Israel, or the ten tribes.

A large mass of prophecy must be left almost unnoticed, which evidently refers to events that are yet in the future. The fullness of the Gentiles is to be brought in, and the blindness of Israel is to be healed. The language of Jeremiah and Ezekiel concerning the new covenant, referring to a more spiritual dispensation; the prophetic vision of the valley of dry bones; the introduction and establishment of the kingdom of the Messiah over the people

that owned the sway of David, his prototype, which is frequently mentioned in figurative language; the foreshadowing of the time when holiness to the Lord should be written on the bells of the horses; the promise of God (Zech. xii. 10) to pour out upon the house of David and upon the inhabitants of Jerusalem the spirit of grace and supplication, so that they should look upon Him whom they had pierced; —these, and other intimations of prophecy, plainly indicate that the future is to open a new chapter in the history of the Jewish people, not less wonderful than those which we have perused already.

But while so much space is occupied by prophecies pertaining to the Church of God under the Old Testament, it is not strange that the intimations of the coming of the world's Redeemer should become with succeeding ages more and more frequent and distinct. The predictions concerning Him are so numerous that even if the pertinency of some of them should be called in question on critical grounds, enough would remain above impeachment to justify the deep-rooted and anxious anticipations of the advent of the great Deliverer. The prophecies of His coming run parallel with those concerning the chosen people and the Church of God, and are often interwoven with them.

The early hopes of a ruined race twined themselves about the promise (Gen. iii. 15) that the seed of the woman should bruise the serpent's head. That promise was substantially renewed when it was declared to Abraham (Gen. xxii. 18) that in

his seed should all the nations of the earth be blessed. With such means of interpreting the several promises made to the succeeding patriarchs, they would be at no loss how to understand them as referring to Him that was to come. The dying words of Jacob addressed to Judah (Gen. xlix. 10) evidently designated his as the line through which the promise was to be fulfilled, for the sceptre should not depart from Judah, nor a lawgiver from between his feet, "until Shiloh come," and to Him should the gathering of the people be. The promise made to the people of Israel by the lips of Moses (Deut. xviii. 15–18) gives assurance of a prophet who should be "like unto him," but who should also, as a Mediator, meet the want expressed by the people at the giving of the law in Horeb, when they said, "let not God speak with us, lest we die." The record in Deuteronomy (xxxiv. 10) that "there arose not a prophet since in Israel like unto Moses, whom the Lord knew face to face," plainly indicates that the national expectation of the Messiah reached beyond Joshua or any of his successors.

The institutions of the ceremonial law, read in the light of the interpretation given them by the author of the Epistle to the Hebrews, are many of them evidently prophetic. The passover, the paschal lamb, the sin-offerings, &c., had a typical meaning, only to be fully elucidated by the incarnation of Christ, as the Lamb of God that taketh away the sin of the world. Among the Psalms are to be found those which are called Messianic, as containing pre-

dictions of the character and kingdom of Christ. Even Eichhorn,* in spite of the adverse bias of his doctrinal views, admits that the Messianic application of the second Psalm is indisputable. Hengstenberg places the Messianic character of Psalms xlv., lxxii., and cx. in a clear light. Other of these sacred lyrics (xvi., xxii., xl.), on plausible grounds, have been applied to a suffering Messiah.

Isaiah speaks (ii. 4) of the coming of Him who should judge among the nations and rebuke many people, insomuch that they should beat their swords into plough-shares, and their spears into pruning-hooks; and nation should not lift up sword against nation, neither should they learn war any more. He describes him (iv. 2) as "The Branch of the Lord," "beautiful and glorious." He sets forth his greatness and dominion (ix. 6, 7): "For unto us a Child is born, unto us a Son is given; and the government shall be upon his shoulder; and his name shall be called Wonderful, Counsellor, the mighty God, the everlasting Father, the Prince of Peace. Of the increase of his government and peace there shall be no end upon the throne of David, and upon his kingdom to order it, and to establish it with judgment and with justice from henceforth even for ever." He was to be a great light (Isa. ix. 2) to those "that walked in darkness." He was to be (Isa, xi.) "a rod out of the stem of Jesse," to "smite the earth with the rod of his mouth," and so to rule that none should hurt or destroy; standing for "an ensign to the

* See Hengstenberg's Christology, I., 83.

people," to which the Gentiles should seek, assem bling the outcasts of Israel and gathering together the dispersed of Judah from the four corners of the earth.

His mission is declared to be (Isa. xlii. 4) to "bring forth judgment to the Gentiles." His gentleness is revealed in the assurance (3) the "bruised reed shall he not break." He should be given (6, 7) for a covenant of the people, for a light of the Gentiles;* to open the blind eyes, to bring out the prisoners from the prison.† But more than this, his crucifixion is prefigured (Isa. lii. 14) in his "visage so marred more than any man, and his form more than the sons of men." The scope of his Gospel in its purifying power is indicated in the assertion (15) that he should "sprinkle many nations," while his condition on earth was to be (Isa. liii. 3) that of one "despised and rejected of men, a man of sorrows and acquainted with grief." His character as a vicarious Redeemer is portrayed (4, 7), bearing our griefs and carrying our sorrows, while on him is laid the iniquity of us all. In the unjust and oppressive judgment to which he should be subjected, he should be (7) "brought as a lamb to the slaughter," yet "as a sheep before her shearers is dumb, so he opened not his mouth." In his death he was (9) to make his grave with the wicked and the rich; and yet, while his soul should be made an offering for sin, he should prolong his days, and "see of the travail of his soul and be

* Also Isa. xlix. 6. † Also Isa. lxi. 1, 2.

satisfied." He should also (12) be numbered with the transgressors, yet bear the sin of many, and make intercession for the transgressors.

Jeremiah (xxiii. 5) speaks of the days when the Lord would raise unto David a righteous Branch, and a King should reign and prosper; even his name is designated (6): "The Lord our Righteousness."* In his days (Jer. xxxiii. 16) Judah should be saved, and Jerusalem should dwell safely. "I will set one Shepherd over them," says the Lord by Ezekiel (xxxiv. 23), "and he shall feed them; even my servant David, he shall feed them, and he shall be their Shepherd."

Micah declares (2) the birthplace of the Messiah. "But thou, Bethlehem Ephratah, . . out of thee shall he come forth unto me that is to be ruler in Israel, whose goings forth have been from old, from everlasting." Moreover (4), he was to be "great unto the ends of the earth." Haggai (ii. 7) predicts the coming of "the Desire of all nations," and the consequent glory of the second temple. Zechariah (ii. 8, and vi. 12, 13) says, "Behold the man whose name is the Branch; and he shall grow up out of his place, and he shall build the temple of the Lord, . . and he shall bear the glory, and shall sit and rule upon his throne, and he shall be a priest upon his throne" His advent to Jerusalem is described (Zech. ix. 9): "Thy king cometh unto thee: he is just and having salvation; lowly, and riding upon an ass, and upon a colt, the foal of

* Also Jer. xxxiii. 16.

an ass." Yet of him it it said (10), "He shall speak peace unto the heathen, and his dominion shall be from sea to sea, and from the river even unto the ends of the earth." Malachi, closing the series of the Old Testament prophets, declares (iii. 1) to the people, "The Lord whom ye seek shall suddenly come to his temple, even the messenger of the covenant whom ye delight in." Yet should he be preceded by the messenger (iii. 1), to prepare the way before him, for the Lord declares that he will send the people (Mal. iv. 5) Elijah the prophet before the coming of the great and dreadful day of the Lord.

Such is a very incomplete summary of the leading features of the prophecies which are supposed to refer to the advent of Christ. He was to be a suffering Redeemer, an "offering for sin." He was to "sprinkle many nations." His kingdom was to be spiritual, for he should rule by the rod of his mouth, and be the Prince of Peace. His purity, power, authority, gentleness are all portrayed. His descent, his humble birth, his priesthood as well as royalty, his rejection by his countrymen, and the grand scope of his career as a vicarious sacrifice, are all brought to view.

With all this, there are extended predictions of the future glory of the Church, and the kingly dominion of its great Head, which it would occupy too much space to present here; the earth filled with the knowledge of the Lord; all nations flowing to the mountain of the Lord's house; the wolf dwell-

ing with the lamb, and the leopard lying down with the kid; the Gentiles coming to the light; the sons of strangers building Zion's walls; the Gentiles seeing her righteousness and all kings her glory; the new and everlasting covenant; the outpouring of the Spirit upon all flesh; Jerusalem secure from generation to generation; the opening of a Fountain to the house of David and to the inhabitants of Jerusalem for sin and all uncleanness; the establishing of a kingdom to endure for ever, the symbol of the spread of which is the Stone cut out of the mountains without hands, that is to fill the whole earth.

Less important in some respects, but perhaps not less striking, are the numerous predictions of the Old Testament concerning individuals. Esau's relative inferiority to Jacob is declared (Gen. xxv. 23) in the words, "the elder shall serve the younger." The career for untold generations of the Ishmaelites, the wild men of the desert, is photographed (Gen. xvi. 12) in a line; Jacob's safe return from Laban (Gen. xxviii. 15); the exception of Caleb (Num. xiv. 24) from the curse that fell upon those that sinned in the wilderness; the judgments (1 Sam. iii. 12) which overtook the house of Eli; the raising up in his place (1 Sam. ii. 35) of "a faithful priest;" the circumstances of Saul's call to the kingdom (1 Sam. ix. 16; x. 6); his rejection as king (1 Sam. xv. 26); the succession of David's son to the throne, and the establishment of his kingdom (2 Sam. vii. 12); Solomon's success in building the temple (13); the death of David's child

(2 Sam. xii. 14); the rending away of the ten tribes from Solomon, and the bestowal of them on Jeroboam (1 Kings xi. 11); the deferring of this till after his death (13); the feeding of the prophet by the ravens (1 Kings xvii. 4); the miraculous supply furnished by the widow's barrel of meal and cruise of oil (14, 16); the defeat and death of Ahab, in accordance with the word of Micaiah (1 Kings xxii. 28); the death of Ahaziah upon his bed (2 Kings i. 4, 16); the cleaving of Naaman's leprosy to Gehazi and his seed (2 Kings v. 27); the sudden supply of food at the siege of Samaria (2 Kings v. 1); the advancement of Hazael to the throne of Syria (2 Kings viii. 13); the destruction of the entire family of Ahab (2 Kings ix. 8); the horrid doom of Jezebel devoured by dogs (10); the three victories of Joash over the Syrians (2 Kings xiii. 17); the succession of Jehu's descendants to the throne of Israel to the fourth generation (2 Kings x. 30); the panic of Sennacherib, and his assassination on his return to Nineveh (2 Kings xix. 7); the futile attempt of the Assyrians to besiege Jerusalem (2 Kings xix. 32); the restoration of Hezekiah from his sickness (2 Kings xx. 5); the captivity of his sons at Babylon (18); the acquisition by Solomon of riches, wealth and honor (2 Chron. i. 12); the capture of Zedekiah by the king of Babylon (Jer. xxi. 7); his fate in dying there, yet not beholding the city (Ezek. xii. 13); the ignominious burial of Jehoiakim (Jer. xxii. 19); the sad fate of his son (25); the doom that left

him childless and without a royal heir (30); the death of Hananiah (Jer. xxviii. 16); the sad fate of Shemaiah (xxix. 32); the death of Amaziah in a polluted land (Amos vii. 17);—all these, not to mention other matters pertaining to individual experience, are made the subjects of prophecy, and indicate the extent to which it was introduced, apart from the great leading themes of Christ's Messiahship and the Church of God.

The New Testament records very largely the fulfillment of Old Testament prophecies, but it contains also prophecies peculiar to itself. Among them are John's declaration of the superiority of Him who was to follow him, and who was to increase, while he himself should decrease (John iii. 30); the transfer of "the kingdom of God" from the Jews to the Gentiles (Matt. xxi. 43); the persecution of Christ's followers (Matt. xxiii. 34); the repeated declarations of Christ that he should be "lifted up," betrayed, scourged, crucified; the coming of many Antichrists in his name (Mark xiii. 6); the national tumults and conflicts which were ere long to take place (7); the publishing of the Gospel to all nations, by which those wars should be preceded (10); the coming of the Comforter (John xiv. 16, 17); the speaking of his disciples with new tongues (Mark xvi. 17); the miraculous powers with which they should be endowed (18); the possession by Christ of "the throne of his father David" (Luke i. 32); His rejection by the men of his generation (Luke xvii. 25); the circumstances of his trial and

execution (xviii. 32); the fate of Jerusalem, already referred to; the assurance given to the dying thief (Luke xxiii. 43); the spread of a spiritual worship, independent of the temple at Jerusalem (John iv. 23); the resurrection of souls from sin, and resurrection from the grave (John v. 25, 28), as well as Christ's own resurrection within three days (John ii. 19); the acknowledgment of Christ's divine claims by those who had rejected him while he lived on earth (John viii. 28); the gathering of his sheep of the Gentile fold (John x. 16); his own voluntary subjection to death as the Good Shepherd (John viii. 17); the brief duration of his public ministry (John xii. 35); the enlarged views which his disciples should attain after his death (John xiv. 20); the panic occasioned by his arrest, so that they should be scattered every man to his own (John xvi. 32); Peter's threefold denial of his master (John xiii. 38); the broad sphere of the apostles' ministry, while they, having received power, after the Holy Ghost had come upon them, should bear witness for Christ in Jerusalem, Judea, Samaria and "the uttermost parts of the earth" (Acts i. 8); the career of Paul revealed to him in vision (Acts ix. 16); the blindness of Elymas (Acts xiii. 11); the assurance given to Paul at Corinth that no man should hurt him (Acts xviii. 10); the declaration that he should testify of Christ at Rome as well as at Jerusalem (Acts xxi. 11); the security of the lives of all on board the vessel in which he was shipwrecked on his voyage (Acts xxvii. 22); the certainty that he

should be brought before Cesar (24) ; the final conversion of the Jews (Rom. xi. 25, 26) ; the development of the great Roman apostasy, its leading features so distinctly outlined (2 Thes. ii., and 1 Tim. 4) that each successive age of the Church has been impressed with the vividness of the prophetic portraiture.

Nor must it be forgotten that Christ himself, the central figure of the New Dispensation, was also a prophet, as well as priest and king. His own teachings, whether in the form of admonition, precept or parable, are full of the predictive element. His words are like the grain of corn which holds the germ of the harvest folded up in it. His parables, like Daniel's golden-headed image, are charts of history—the history of that kingdom which cometh not with observation, but is destined to the empire of the world. The principles He authoritatively announced or enjoined are rays of light shot through the chaos of the future, enabling the devout student to form some approximately right conception of the progress of the great drama of a world to be converted to God.

Neither must it be overlooked that the book of Revelation is a kind of prophetic epic, drawing, amid the thickening glooms of social corruption and Roman terror, the curtain of the future, and disclosing the ultimate triumphs of the Church of God. Here, amid much that is still obscure, we have distinct intimation of the leading outlines of the progress of Christianity, and the hostility with which that pro

gress should be met. We see the working of visible and invisible powers; the lights and shadows that cross the path of the Church; the sometimes dominating but finally crushed power of Antichrist; the persecution and oppressions from which those rise triumphant who have passed through great tribulation, and washed their robes and made them white in the blood of the Lamb; the New Jerusalem, coming down from God out of heaven, amid the jubilant songs of the saints exultant, and, through Him that loved them, more than conquerors over all the oppositions and malignant projects of earth and hell.

Brief, rapid, and necessarily imperfect as our survey of prophecy has been, it may aid us in forming an estimate of the bearing upon the claims of a Divine revelation, of the indisputable fulfillment of Scripture predictions concerning the fate of ancient cities and empires. These predictions do not stand alone. They occupy their own place in a record which claims to be given by Divine inspiration, and is suffused and colored throughout by the prophetic element. The problem to be solved is quite different from what it would be if the predictions whose fulfillment has been traced were found in connection with another class of documents of a different character. Put them in histories like those of Livy or Tacitus or Thucydides, and they would appear incongruous. It might be a less venturous and desperate essay to account for them on the grounds of human sagacity or shrewd and fortunate surmises.

Even then, it is true, they would stand apart by themselves, asserting in their lofty tone and broad scope an infinite superiority over all with which they might chance to be conjoined. Even then they would stand in striking contrast with the timid and equivocal utterances of Delphic oracles, or the vaticinations of a practised statesmanship.

But when we find them occupying a place within a record into which the tissue of prophecy is interwoven from first to last, they are like an impregnable fortress within a walled city that is itself a citadel. The walls of the city must first be demolished, before the fortress can be touched. We must have an explanation and solution of the structure of the Scriptures themselves, made up largely of prophecy and its fulfillment, before the argument derived from the testimony of the cities and empires of ancient prophecy can be fairly met.

What a task, then, is imposed on the skeptic who calls in question the Divine origin and authority of the Sacred Record! Grant that he may discover here and there a sentence in which a future result is foretold on which history throws no light, and which even *appears* in conflict with ascertained facts How insignificant do his objections seem when confronted with the great cloud of witnesses to the actual fulfillment of prophecy! Is it of no account that amid such varied and numerous predictions there should be some which the loss of historic records has left us without the means of fitly interpre 'ng? Is it anything more than a just

candor to admit that in some instances the future may yet do for them what the past few years have done for others—elucidate them beyond the hazards of doubt or controversy? But even if he could make good his objections, how is he to dispose of the accumulated mass of evidence to the fulfillment of Scripture prophecy? He cannot begin by impeaching the character of the Sacred Record; for the prophecies in question occupy but a fitting place in it, and are quite in keeping with the prophetic element that pervades them. That element is inseparable from it. Great portions of its history are left without meaning, if considered apart from it. Thus it challenges the reverence due to inspiration. It cannot lower its claims, and where is the man venturous enough to accept the challenge which they present? Where is the man to be found who will deliberately and intelligently undertake to explain how the vast mass of prophecy, congruous in itself, and breathing a tone infinitely above all art or subterfuge or forgery, has come into existence, and how century after century it was inwoven in the Sacred Record till, thousands of years after the voice of prophecy was silent, the curious traveler borrows the pen of the prophet to give vividness to his descriptions?

There are two distinct conclusions to which we are brought by a candid examination of prophecy. One is the inspiration of the Sacred Scriptures, and the other is God's providential government of the world, shaping it to a definite and predestined end.

As to the first, it is obvious that the vindication of the prophetic character of the Bible disposes at once of nearly all the objections which have been urged against its inspiration. The narrative portions, previously obscure, perhaps, in their scope, grow luminous when we see in them a historical commentary on inspired predictions. The objector who might cavil at the minute ceremonial of the Levitical code is silenced when he examines it in the light of its prophetic significance, as suggested in the Epistle to the Hebrews. Many a seemingly trivial incident elucidates the fulfillment of some important prediction. In the language of a recent writer in one of our religious journals: "Let any one consider how the rays from these hundred points of prophecy, the divinely-kindled lights that illumine the progress and prospects of the Church, cross and recross, are reflected and refracted, find mirrors for themselves in narrative and incident sometimes minute or seemingly trivial; and then ask himself where it is possible, as a recent writer on inspiration suggests, to draw any line which shall run through the Scriptures, leaving the divine element on the one side and the uninspired or human element on the other? If one should attempt to class the book of Ruth as simply a beautiful Jewish pastoral, a proper regard for the prophetical claims of the word of God would force him to acknowledge in it something higher and better, and behold in it a golden link in the chain of fulfilled prophecy, which stretches from the promise made to Abraham to the manger of Bethlehem and

the cross of our redemption. Should one presume to speak contemptuously of Paul's mention of his cloak in his Epistle to Timothy, he might find, if the facts of human experience were revealed, that, in the chill of that Roman prison, which made a cloak needful, the prophecies of what Christ's faithful disciples were to suffer were in part fulfilled, or possibly that many a martyr of later days, in damp dungeon or the cave of the exile, had blessed God for that inspired wisdom, which had placed in the Sacred Record a fact which linked the ages of martyrdom together, and helped the suffering confessor to feel that, over the centuries, the faithful reformer might stretch the hand of brotherhood to the faithful apostle and be assured of sympathy."

But nothing can be more clear than that human wisdom or sagacity is utterly incompetent to trace the minute features of the doom of nations as they are traced in the prophecies of the Bible; and if these prophecies have not been fulfilled—manifestly so, in the light of facts which have been adduced—it would be difficult to imagine any possible fulfillment of prophecy above the reach of the caviling objector.

But no one can take a survey of the grand sweep of prophecy, and its fulfillment in the infliction of a just judgment upon guilty nations, without having the conclusion forced upon him that there is One that ruleth in the armies of heaven and doeth His will among the inhabitants of the earth; One who has the hearts of kings in his hand, and turneth

them as the rivers of water are turned. For it is not to be overlooked that the prophetic landscape extends on to the grand consummation, when the kingdoms of this world shall all become subject to the King of Zion; when the everlasting dominion of the great Ancient of days shall be fully established. The vast proportion of yet unfulfilled prophecy has reference especially to this consummation, and in reading the prophetic doom of ancient nations we are often met, before we close the record, with some intimation of the future glories of the Messianic reign.

The thoughtful student of the Bible, taking the book of Isaiah in its entireness as a fitting illustration of the scope of prophecy, sees spread out before him the graveyard of nations and empires—their epitaphs traced, one after another, by the prophet's pen. But away in the distance he sees a King dom that cometh not with observation, and all the monarchs of the earth sink to the tomb, with their pageantry and pomp, that over them the eye may range more free, and discern the advent of One who is to reign till He hath put all things beneath His feet. The nation and kingdom that will not serve Him shall utterly perish. He who disposes of crowns and of those that wear them, who putteth down one and lifteth up another, who writes the doom of nations whilst yet in all the vigor of their prosperity and glory, and to whom the thousand years of their lingering decay are but as a day, will overturn, and overturn, and overturn, till the way is prepared for

Him whose right it is to reign. Prophecy attests His purpose and history declares its execution. We cannot survey the past without feeling that the future is in the hands of God. Fulfilled prophecy gives pledge for that which is unfulfilled, and we rise from the study of it with the confirmed conviction that heaven and earth may pass away, but not one jot or tittle of the Divine purpose, declared in Scripture, can ever fail.





